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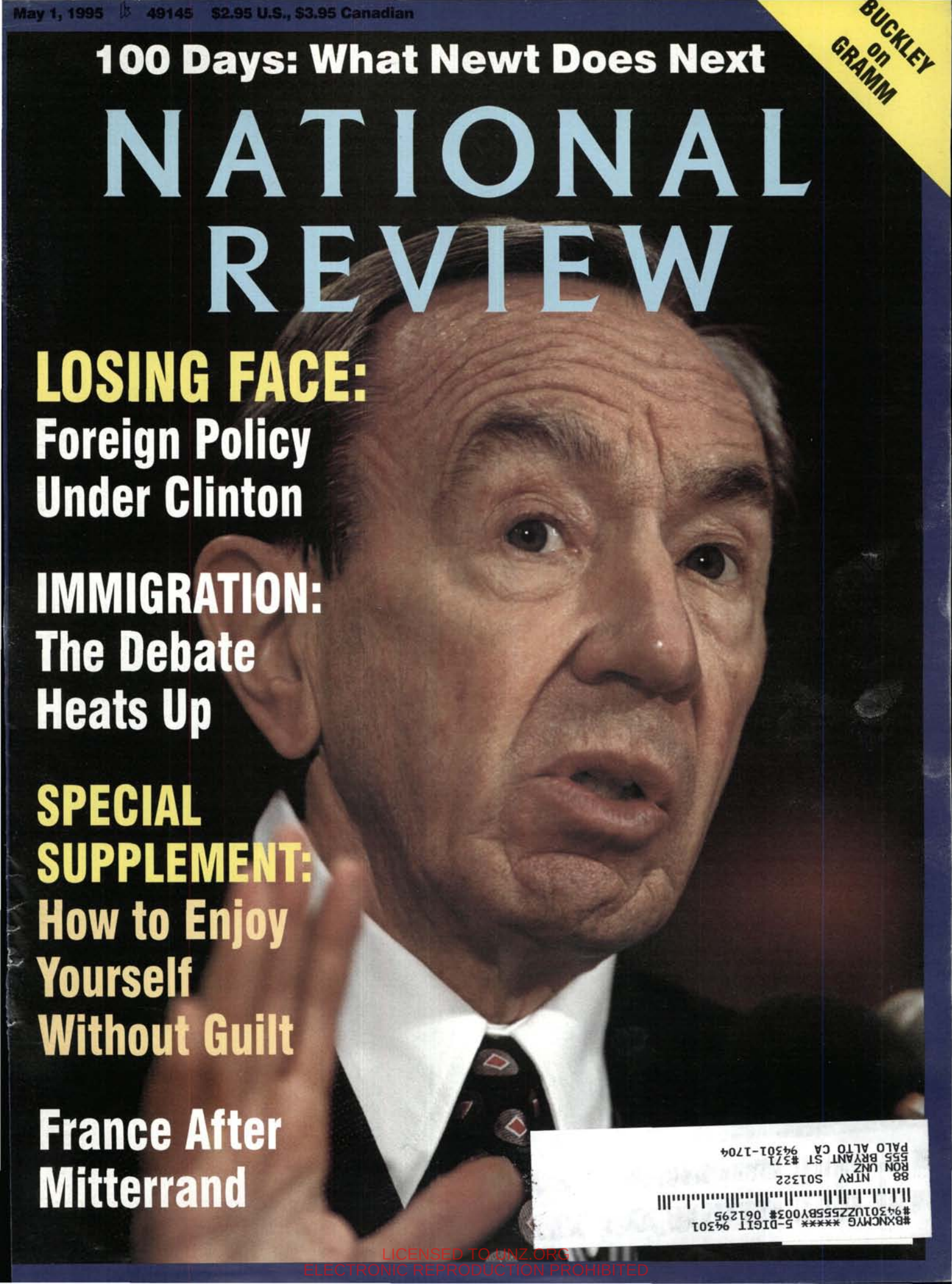

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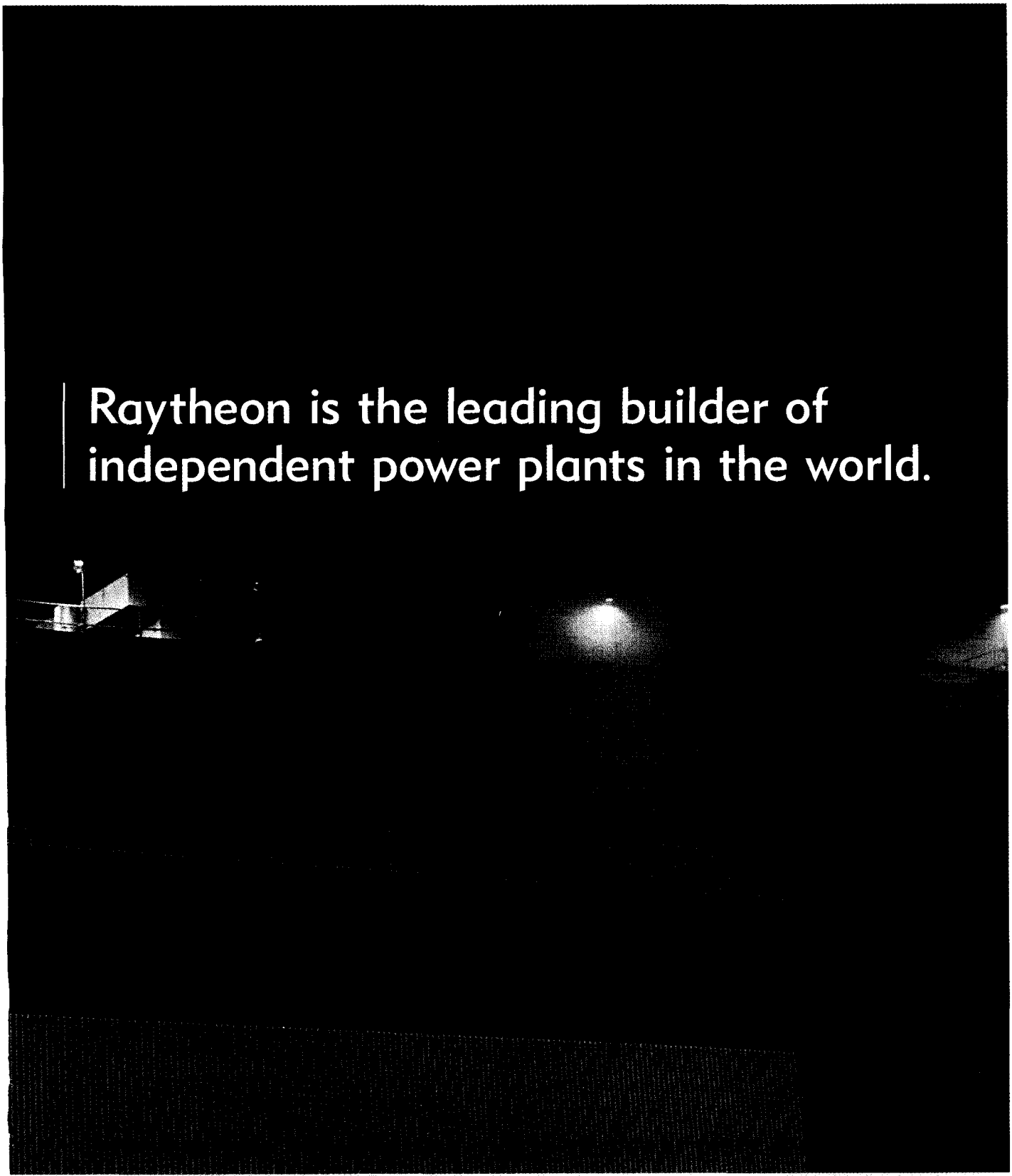

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NATIONAL REVIEW

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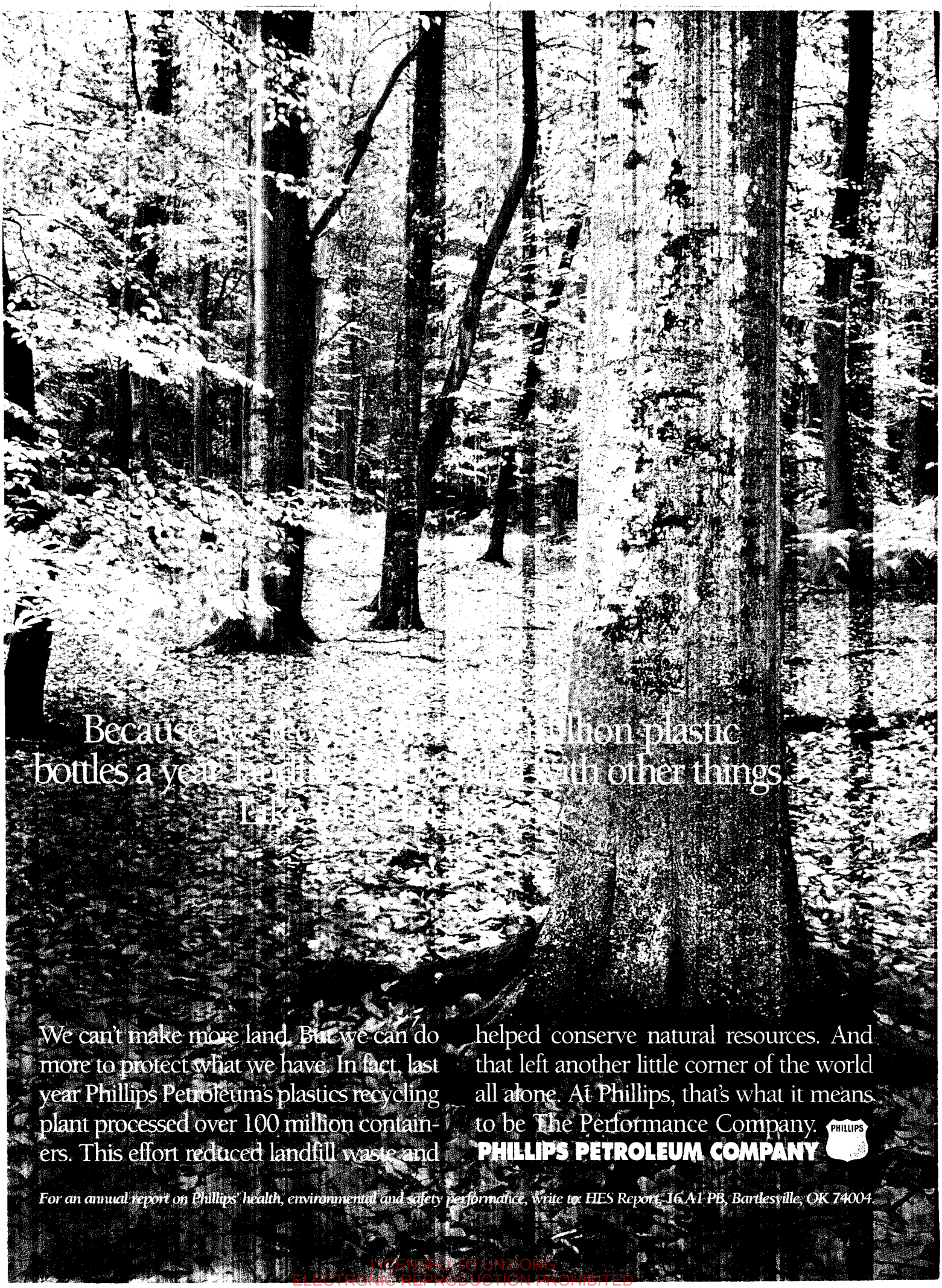

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Letters

Welfare Wishes

After reading "Welfare-Reform Rescue" ["The Week," Apr. 17] I wondered if perhaps we could clarify the dispute over the fear that denying welfare funds to the mothers of illegitimate children would lead to more abortions, by adopting this principle: "We do not subsidize conduct that we do not want to encourage." On that principle the government would not contribute funds for the support of children born out of wedlock, or for abortions, or for legal aid to poor couples seeking divorce, or for assisted suicide (when the day comes that the Supreme Court declares it a constitutional right, as the Court is quite capable of doing).

There is, of course, no chance that Congress would accept such a policy. But I wish some congressman would propose it and flush out the Democrats and liberal Republicans who would deny funds only to illegitimate babies.

Francis Canavan, SJ
Fordham University
Bronx, N.Y.

The Nature of God

I was deeply moved by David Brudnoy's poignant yet matter-of-fact account "Positively HIV" [Apr. 17]. It was free of deliberate pathos yet cried of the doom faced by a brilliant, passionate person. With deference for Mr. Brudnoy's courage, I ask him to consider his piece as merely the first of many pieces, perhaps even as the embryo of a book. I feel this way not because of what he said but on account of what he left out.

Mr. Brudnoy says he does not have enough time left to debate the moral status of practicing homosexuals. I diffidently suggest that this is precisely the purpose for which he has time left. He claims that discussion would resemble an argument about the nature of God. Right! What could be a worthier adventure? One of the fundamental differences we have with modern American liberals is that they focus on the nature of man while we focus on the nature of God.

The enormous contribution that Mr. Brudnoy now has the ability to make has nothing to do with his homosexuality. According to the Torah, which I believe to be the fountainhead of conservative doctrine and Western Civilization, homosexuality is an activity, not an identity. Thus, Mr. Brudnoy's message has no more to do with how he occupied himself for an hour last week than it does with whether he observed last Sabbath or will observe Passover. No, his unique contribution will spring from his calm ability to contemplate mortality with honesty and grace.

Meanwhile he has my prayers and those of countless others for a *refuah shleimah*, a complete recovery.

Rabbi Daniel Lapin
Mercer Island, Wash.

I thank Rabbi Lapin for his thoughtful, considerate, and wisely compassionate letter. Rabbi Lapin is quite right that fundamental matters, those of transcendent worth, do properly engage us—all of us—as we mature and as we begin to understand more about our place in the universe. Whether or not I'm capable of doing this in extended form—a book, as the rabbi suggests, or a TV movie-of-the-week, as some promoters have urged—is problematic, in part because I am fully engaged in my work now and in part because I am not in general a theologically oriented person. Right now I think that others will do the job better than I can.

—DB

Middle-Class Capital

David Frum's review of *Arrogant Capital* by Kevin Phillips ["The Prophet of Resentment," Apr. 3] provides some interesting insights on reasons for the stagnation of middle-class incomes during the Eighties, despite a substantial rate of economic growth.

In *The Politics of Rich and Poor* Phillips claimed that an upward redistribution of wealth had been caused by a mix of an expansionary fiscal policy characterized by huge deficits, and a contractionary monetary policy characterized by high real interest rates. The result was a transfer of wealth, through larger interest payments, from middle-class taxpayers and borrowers to upper-class bondholders and lenders. To correct this imbalance, Phillips recommends raising taxes on high-income earners in order to reduce the deficit and lower interest rates.

History shows, however, that raising taxes on the "rich" does not reduce the deficit or real interest rates. Since 1990 marginal tax rates on high-income earners have increased 43 per cent, yet the deficit for the first half of this decade averaged 4 per cent of GDP, the same as the last decade. As far as interest rates are concerned, the prime lending rate was 10 per cent a few years ago and now is 9 per cent. But over the same period inflation has declined from an annual rate of about 5 to 3 per cent, so that the *real* interest rate has actually *increased* from 5 to 6 per cent. Thus, not only is it clear, as Mr. Frum points out, that social factors significantly affect middle-class incomes; it is also apparent that Mr. Phillips's argument that lowering tax rates will increase deficits and real interest rates is inconsistent with recent history.

Ken Bank
Morristown, N.J.

Movie Morality

I appreciate John Simon's encyclopedic knowledge of the film industry and admire his desire to maintain high critical standards by which to judge the quality of films. However, my simmering complaint is that he rarely focuses on the moral or ethical premises of a film. His review of *Boys on the Side* [Mar. 20] is a case in point. I don't question whether the acting or lighting is top notch. What concerns me is that the central character's lesbianism is not an issue for Mr. Simon. He also treats Holly's murder of her husband as nothing but an entertaining plot device.

One of the things I would expect NATIONAL REVIEW to yell "stop" about, as it stands athwart history, is moral decay, exemplified in part by an increasingly blasé attitude about killing and perverted sexual practice.

Bruce P. McKechnie
Portland, Pa.

When a novelist writes sympathetically about his characters, it does not mean that he endorses everything they say or do, let alone that he would want to speak and act like them. When a film critic reviews a film, similar principles prevail. He assesses structure (self-consistency), truthfulness, effectiveness, and beauty—as he *sees it. How else can he? There are other kinds of criticism, but this is the kind I believe in. I also believe that aesthetics is a form of ethics, but for the development of this thesis, a letters column is not space enough.*

—JS

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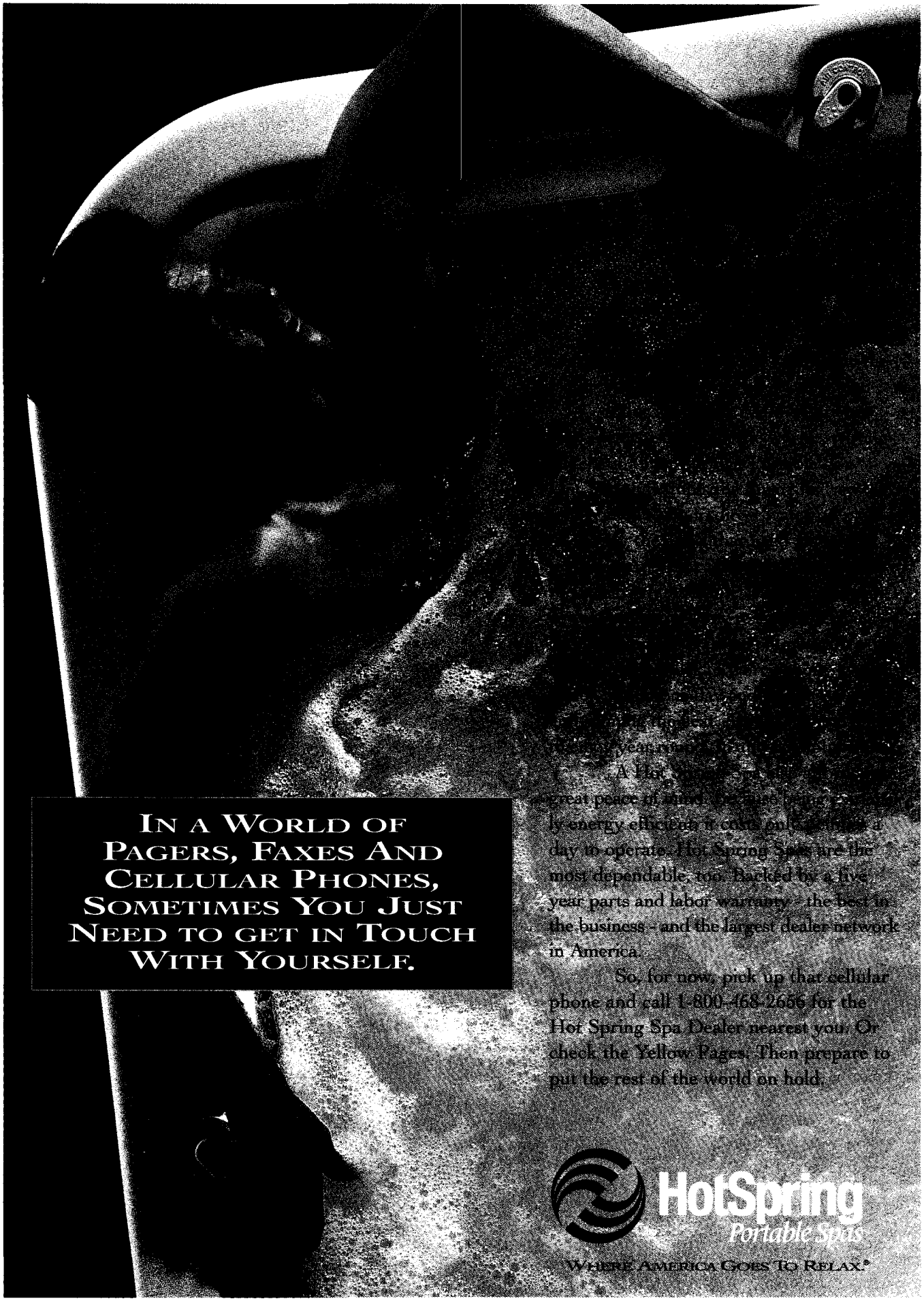
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FROM THE EDITOR

How Insensitive

■ "Is Senator D'Amato so tasteless and insensitive that he fails to realize that his language and unrestrained behaviour offend all voters concerned with the dignity of the Senate?" asks the *New York Times* in a recent editorial on the senator's imitation of a Japanese accent when discussing Judge Ito's handling of the O. J. Simpson trial.

The question answers itself. Of course, Senator D'Amato realizes he is tasteless and insensitive; it is a vital part of his appeal to New Yorkers.

But what of those New York voters concerned with the dignity of the Senate? In the barrooms on Second Avenue, m'lud, they talk of little else.

As for Asian-Americans, they are rather robust in their attitudes to that ethnic humor which, however tasteless, is bound to be generated when different ethnic groups live alongside one another. But since many are GOP voters, the senator apologized.

It was an empty gesture. Very few people were really offended. And the senator was not genuinely contrite.

Such apologies are a ritual of multicultural America. Any public remark deemed racist, sexist, or homophobic by the media must be purged by an apology, or in really serious cases by a request for therapy. Whereupon people of all ethnicities continue to swap the same jokes in private.

The Tibetan prayer wheel has always struck me as a device that could be adapted to this new style of gaffe. Any tasteless or insensitive remark might then be immediately followed by a spin of the wheel equivalent to the saying of three multicultural platitudes, e.g., "The white race is the cancer of history." That would purge the offense.

And it would solve the problem of what to give the senator for Kwanzaa.

■ Because Peter Brimelow's book, *Alien Nation*, began life as an *NR* article, and because it promises to ignite a national debate on immigration, we felt it right to run reviews of it from different standpoints.

The national debate has already begun with long reviews in the *Atlantic*, the *Washington Monthly*, and *Business Week* which mixed respectful criticism with occasional abuse. But the most revealing review was in the far-left *Village Voice*; it denounced the book while inadvertently confirming its argument: "We might dismiss the rantings of Peter Brimelow as delusional paranoia. But the truth is, it's more of a desperate gasp. As multinational development schemes like NAFTA and GATT continue to degrade the quality of Third World life, more and more people are being displaced. We take our acts across oceans in order to survive. Our survival depends on the destruction of the privilege Brimelow is so desperate to defend. His fear is justified. We will bury him."

Well, you can't say you weren't warned.

■ A correspondent rebukes me for scorning historical objectivity in my column on the *Enola Gay* controversy at the Smithsonian. So let me make clear that I value genuine objectivity in historical scholarship. But it must be distinguished from the liberal self-hatred that often usurps its name.

How? A simple question can generally be asked of any large historical account: does it admit that America has great achievements to its credit as well as crimes to its shame?

The modern *lumpen-liberal* cannot honestly admit this. He may claim to do so in general, but he always sees a shameful aspect to the particular matter under discussion.

It is a rhetorical trick, of course. By asserting the collective wickedness of the United States, he expects to be personally absolved of any complicity.

The French expression *qui s'excuse s'accuse* has been reversed by Smithsonian liberalism to become "he who accuses himself excuses himself." Or for those with a taste for Biblical language: "He who is not against me is against me."

— JOHN O'SULLIVAN

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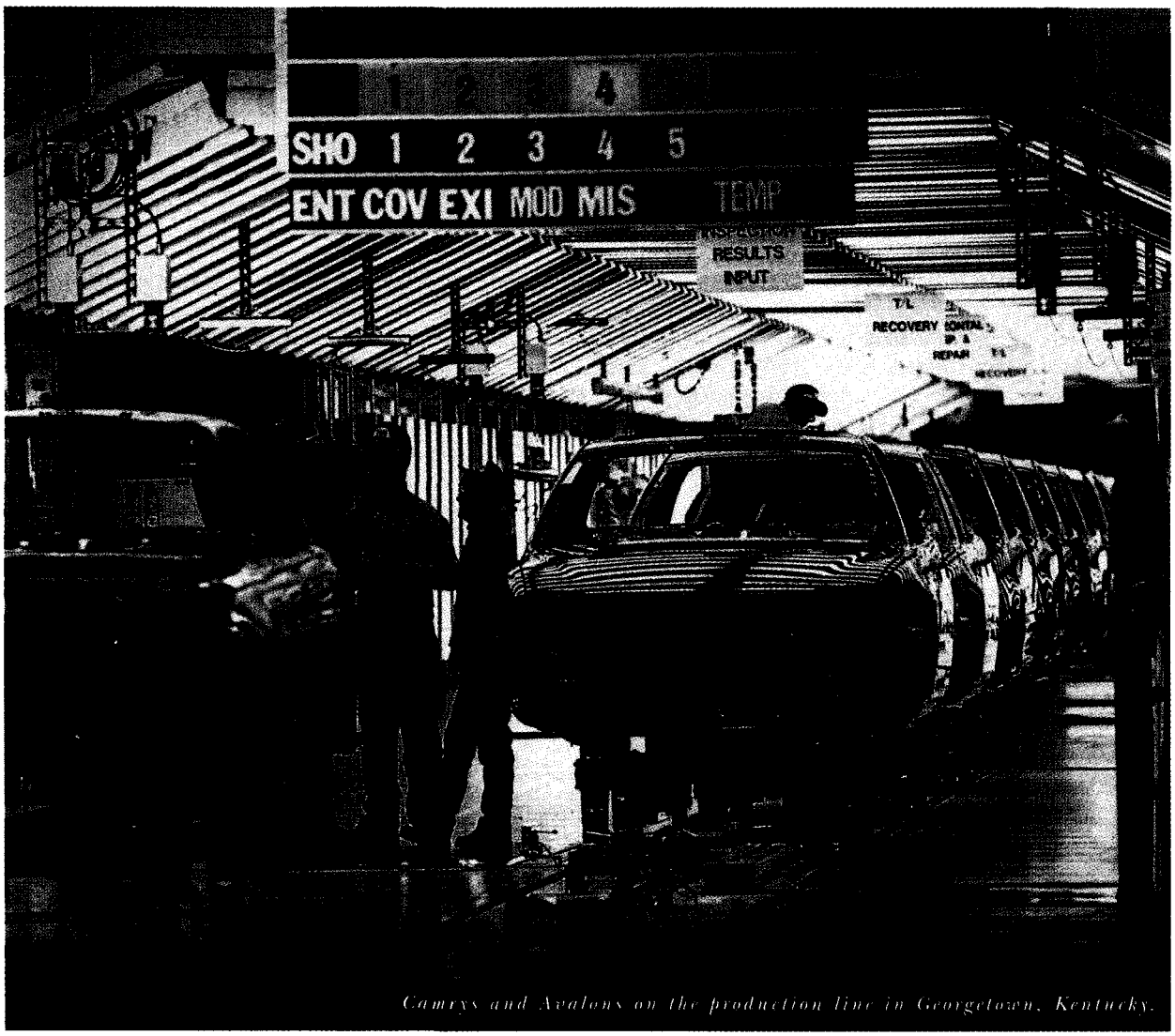

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FOR THE RECORD

■ "We're now covering the Speaker, not the President," *New Republic*'s **Fred Barnes** said of media in general, two nights before **Newt Gingrich** addressed the nation on four networks (CNBC, CNN, C-SPAN, CBS). Another overturned decades-old D.C. thought-pattern is expectation of sluggish congressional pace. House met for 487 hours, compared to usual 123—had 279 votes *v.* usual 64. Says *Newsweek*'s **Eleanor Clift** on *McLaughlin Group*: "I think that in many ways Newt Gingrich is the **Ronald Reagan** of congressional politics. He showed that the system can work." . . . Other media types less impressed. After tax cuts passed in House, TV's Parson Grim, **Bill Moyers**, made remarkable claim: "The 1981 tax cuts were followed by the biggest economic downturn of the century." Continuing his rewrite of Eighties, NBC's "balanced and fair" commentator also warned: "Ronald Reagan promised spending cuts that never happened and the deficit went right though the ceiling." (Congress refused RR $200 to $300 billion in budget cuts as Democratic leaders cited Moyers's TV specials protesting cuts.) . . . Biggest impact of 100 Days is rightward shift of public debate. Rep. **Christopher Cox** (R., Calif.) notes: "Even when we're losing the debate we're debating our issues." More evidence: Majority Leader **Bob Dole**, no supply-sider in Eighties, announced **Jack Kemp** would head his and Gingrich's new tax-cut commission. And Sen. **Richard Lugar** (Ind.), a competitor with Dole for '96 GOP nomination, called for abolishing IRS and replacing income tax with sales levy. . . . Chicago Mayor **Richard Daley** is forlorn about impact of 100 Days: "The Democrats are the party of Washington . . . the party of bureaucrats . . . the party of the special interests . . . the pro-tax party."

■ Will cable TV pick up where PBS left off? Arts & Entertainment (A&E) network's *Biography of J. Edgar Hoover* features cartoonish handling of Cold War. In script that might have been written by one of Hollywood 10, A&E implies that trials of U.S. traitors **Alger Hiss** and **Ethel Rosenberg** were just part of giant **Hoover** conspiracy to create bogus "Red Menace" and keep himself in power. A&E has, meanwhile, produced study of **Jimmy Carter** about which ex-Prez said after screening: "Ninety per cent of it I enjoyed."

■ Disney–Miramax reeling from firestorm over its anti-Catholic film, *Priest*. "I have been overwhelmed by the support," said **William Donohue**, president of Catholic League for Civil and Religious Rights, who organized Disney boycott. Supporters include Protestant coalitions, **Daniel Lapin** and other Orthodox Jewish rabbis, and even *USA Today*'s far-left columnist **Barbara Reynolds**. . . . Donohue also led protest earlier this year over *60 Minutes* attack on Catholic beliefs by reporter **Mike Wallace** and producer **Barry Lando**. ("Succor for bigots," he charged.) National Conference of Catholic Bishops, however, declined to issue statement about ugly, one-sided show. Reason, according to NCCB insider: goofy Sixties liberal types dominate staff. Though they got bishops to speak out in Eighties for Soviet appeasement ("nuclear freeze") and in Nineties against Contract with America, they are cowardly lions when it comes to defending faith against media giant CBS.

"That's the problem with derivatives: once you've lost £100 million, half an hour later you want to lose another £100 million."

■ In Brazil, **Henry Kissinger** told business groups that Mexico's problems mean Argentina and Brazil will exceed Latin American NAFTA countries in trade growth. . . . *N.Y. Times* reports Rio de Janeiro has kidnapping every four days; Colombia has one every six hours. . . . Iranian Pres. **Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani**'s government rocked by Teheran riots that left 140 dead. . . . Israel's attempt to privatize suffered another setback as chairman of program, **Yussi Nitzani**, abandoned shipbuilding corporation's sale under parliamentary pressure. . . . New Polish Prime Minister, **Jozef Oleksy**, a former Communist, reaffirmed Poland's desire for NATO membership by 1996. . . . Chinese government economist **Zhou Shijan**—invoking Mexico crisis—warns that foreign borrowing reaching $100 billion "is approaching the security line."

■ NR Institute and International Advertising Association holding symposium on "Advertising and the Media in an Open Society," May 3, in NYC. Speakers include: **Digby Anderson**, **Larry Kudlow**, **Eric Breindel**. Fax **Kelly Forsberg**, 212-213-9369, for details. . . . Story in conservative student journal *Light and Truth* that first exposed Yale University's stalling on $20-million **Lee M. Bass** grant was written by **Pat Collins** and **Scott Armel**, both graduates of **M. Stanton Evans**'s National Journalism Center, which is celebrating 1,000 conservatively trained graduates. NJC's 12-week spring session starts June 12. Call 202-544-1333 or fax 202-544-5368 for applications.

■ *Washington Times*'s **John McCaslin** reports that Rep. **Sidney Yates** (D., Ill.) doesn't know why Hispanic high-school students were offended when he asked them if they owned sombereros and did Mexican hat dance: "I enjoy the Mexican hat dance . . . I bought one of those big sombreros on vacation a few years ago."

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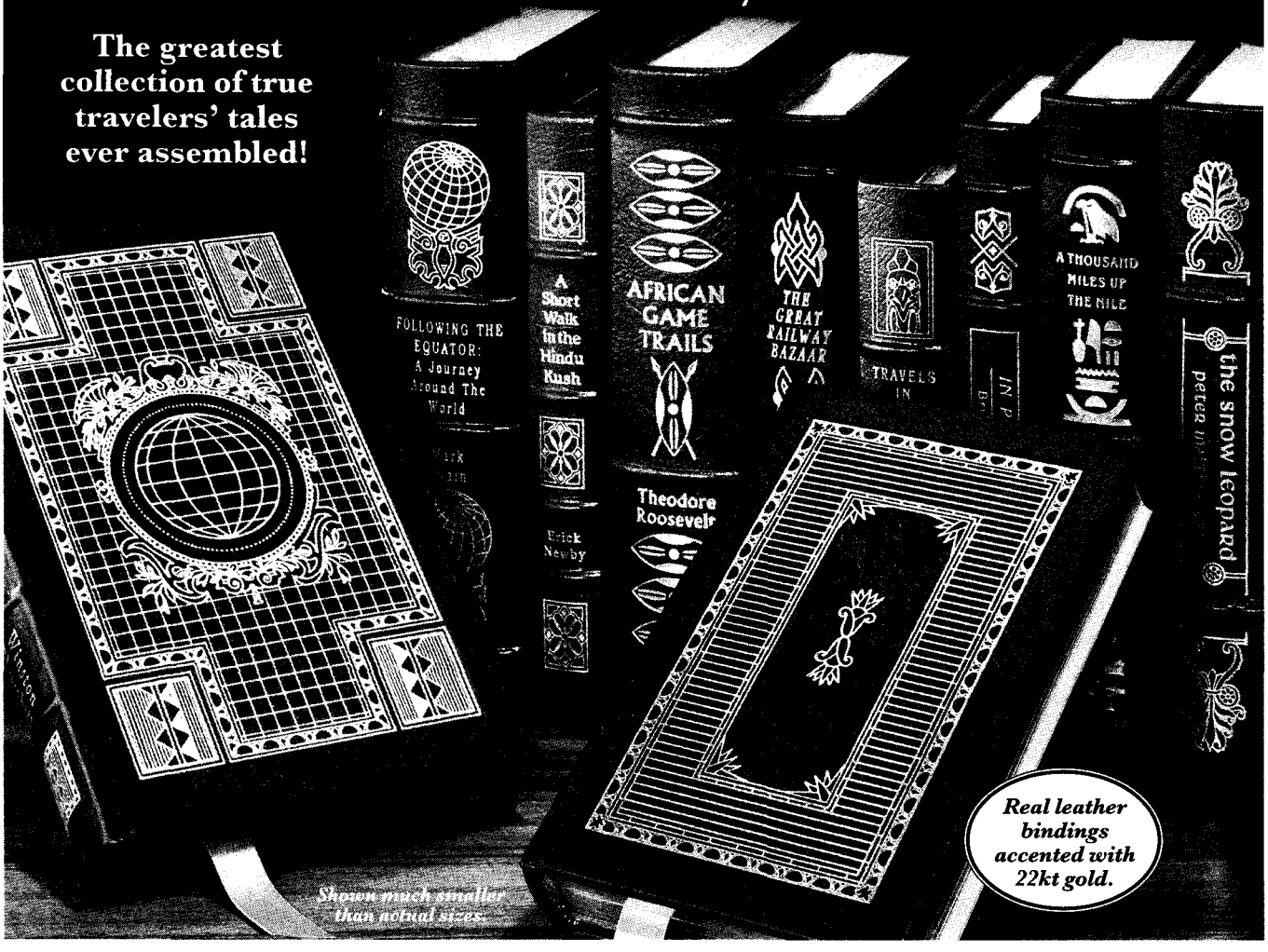
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THE WEEK

■ Candidate Clinton promised a middle-class tax cut, and you just got one. *Now* do you believe?

■ Aw, c'mon, at least you can believe he won't *veto* it, can't you?

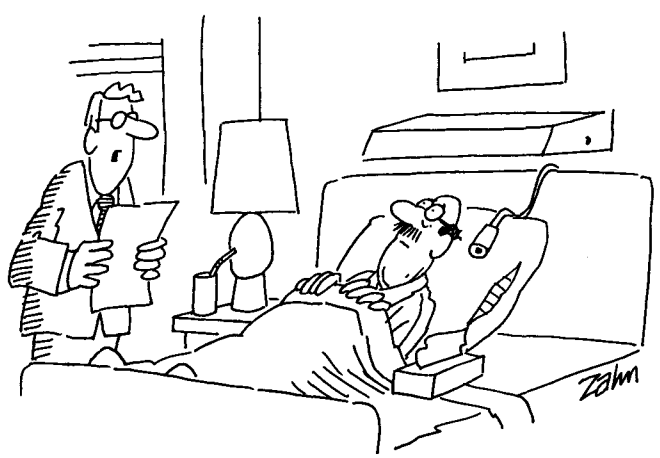
■ The rescissions bill passed the Senate 99 to 0, a sure sign that something had gone wrong. At one point Senate Republicans seemed poised to kill outright a proposed amendment from Minority Leader Tom Daschle seeking to restore $1.3 billion in social-welfare spending. But they let the moment pass. Daschle originally wanted $35 million for the Women, Infants, and Children program; he got $35 million. He wanted $210 million for AmeriCorps; he got $105 million. He wanted $100 million for the Safe and Drug-Free Schools program; he got $100 million. He wanted $67.6 million for Goals 2000; he got $60 million. At the end of the day, Senate Republicans shied away from major cuts on the Corporation for Public Broadcasting. The final bill did cut $812 million more than the version reported out of committee, but only by looking to easy—and sometimes bogus—sources like money languishing unused in highway accounts. *This* is the body too devoted to budgetary pain to permit tax cuts?

■ House Democrats are accusing Newt Gingrich of scheming to give a tax break to Rupert Murdoch, of book-deal fame. Seems a Murdoch-owned Atlanta TV station can still be sold under an FCC minority-preference program slated for elimination, saving Murdoch a cool $30 million in taxes. Media giant Viacom, in contrast, got no such favor and stands to pay an additional $500 million in taxes on a similar deal. Democrats have sniffed out a tale of cronyism and hypocrisy. Trouble is, it has nothing to do with Gingrich. Senator Carol Mosely-Braun (D., Ill.) insisted on the exemption in a House–Senate conference because Murdoch is selling his station to her hometown's Tribune Co., partly owned by black entertainment mogul Quincy Jones. The more Murdoch saves in taxes, the less Tribune and Jones pay to buy his station. Under the same dispensation, Jones is selling a New Orleans station he partly owns to Tribune (don't ask), saving himself and the station's other investor (Time Warner) some $3 million. Next: Newt's role in the baseball strike, the secret drafting of Hillary's health plan, and the sinking of the good *Reuben James*.

■ Interviewed by Larry King, Newt Gingrich said the job he's always wanted is zookeeper. Well, he's got it.

■ On a recent *Face the Nation,* the Speaker announced that he was "opposed" to "official prayer[s]" in school, which sounded different from his position at the beginning of the hundred days, when he was calling for a school-prayer amendment. Gingrich also came out for federal funding of abortions in cases of rape and incest—a major concession going well beyond (and indeed contradicting) the *Roe* principle that abortion is justified by a right to privacy. Describing the country as "pro-choice but anti-abortion," he said "we can have a pretty large area of civil discussion." Which would be fine, if he could give one instance of "moderates" in his own party (forget liberal Democrats) ceding an inch of their down-the-line pro-abortion position. If Mr. Gingrich doesn't watch out, his only hope for keeping social conservatives during the hundred days from late July to Election Day, 1996, will be prayer.

■ On the eve of the 1994 election, Oregon Senator Mark Hatfield gave a last-minute boost to a long-time associate: Democratic Representative Elizabeth Furse. Hatfield held a press conference with Miss Furse, ostensibly to issue a joint call for light rail in the Portland area, but the appearance was widely interpreted as an endorsement. Before winning her congressional seat in 1992, Miss Furse had been executive director of the Oregon Peace Institute, on whose advisory board Mr. Hatfield still serves. His laying on of hands may well have been what kept Representative Furse in Congress (she won by just 300 votes). On the losing end of Senator Hatfield's generosity was conservative Bill Witt, a businessman making his first run at elected office. Mr. Witt may now challenge Hatfield in the 1996 GOP primary on the theory that Republicans would prefer one of their own in the Senate. All primary voters would need to know is who has the endorsement of Elizabeth Furse.



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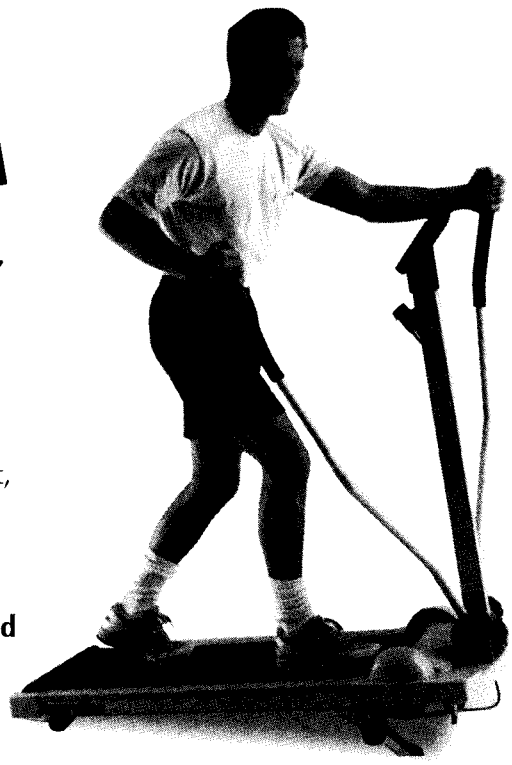

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■ Pete Wilson met with New York Mayor Rudy Giuliani in an attempt to secure the endorsement that would help Wilson win the New York primary. But Giuliani failed to endorse Bob Dole.

■ D.C. Home Rule has ended, for now. Facing yet another dismal year—a $722-million budget deficit, city bonds rated as "junk," a huge bureaucracy, phantom services, and a business-as-usual Mayor Marion Barry and City Council—Congress passed legislation placing the District under a five-man financial control board (chosen by the White House) with total authority over spending, borrowing, hiring, contracts, and so on. And to think the District wanted two senators. As if Robert Byrd weren't enough.

■ CLARIFICATION: The Week [April 17] reported that a raid on a District of Columbia public-housing complex by federal law-enforcement agents was aborted after "the Untouchables" issued a press release announcing the operation. We apologize to the federal agents. It was the District's Department of Public and Assisted Housing that issued the press release. Maybe D.C. non–Home Rule can do better.

■ On March 31, Bill Clinton became the first President to visit Haiti since FDR—who also went to salute American troops sent to bring stability and democracy. The UN has declared Haiti so "safe and secure" that American troops can now be replaced by a multilateral force under UN command. There is some sleight of hand here, for the UN commander is an American general and 2,400 of his 6,000 troops are American soldiers. Still, with public opinion almost 2 to 1 against having American troops in Haiti, it was necessary to find some excuse for getting most of them out. But the very week of Mr. Clinton's visit, two American missionaries were shot, and a leader of the opposition (a 34-year-old mother of three) was murdered. Common and political crime is rising. There is no visible economic progress or foreign investment, and unemployment hovers around 75 per cent. President Aristide has done little to promote reconciliation: during the Clinton visit, it was Mr. Clinton who spoke of national unity. When the generous foreign aid runs out and the UN forces are withdrawn next year, will Haiti be any more "safe and secure" than it has been for the last two hundred years?

■ On her trip to Bangladesh, Mrs. Clinton received an earnest query from a native woman: "Do you have any cows in your house?" The Bangladeshi obviously has a lot to learn about cattle futures. But if Bangladesh follows the First Lady's tips, it could be as rich as Switzerland by next Tuesday.

■ The National Transportation Safety Board recently announced that a child safety seat would have prevented the death of a baby killed in an airplane crash in Charlotte, North Carolina, last July. The board reiterated its long-standing recommendation that the Federal Aviation Administration require parents to put small children in safety seats rather than hold them on their laps. Yet a study commissioned by the FAA found that such a requirement would have prevented only one death during the 15-year period beginning in 1978. "One death is too many," a Safety Board spokesman told the *New York Times*. "How would you like to be that parent?" True, human beings are not fungible. But on looking at the one death that did occur, the Safety Board ignores the many more lives the money spent to implement the safety-seat requirement (about $1 billion) could save if spent in other ways. Furthermore, forcing families to buy additional tickets for babies and toddlers will lead some to prefer driving, a much more dangerous mode of transportation. (There are *forty times* more fatalities per passenger mile on the highways than in the air.) Consequently, mandating safety seats on airplanes could actually raise total fatalities. If one death is too many, what about several?

■ On April 6 ABC aired a news special that examined alternatives to America's war on drugs, including decriminalization. In a press release condemning the program, former deputy drug czar John P. Walters reported that it features "the story of Jim Montgomery, who, we are told, was sentenced to life in prison for having two ounces of marijuana in the backpack of his wheelchair." Like many other people with spinal-cord injuries, Mr. Montgomery used marijuana to relieve pain and muscle spasms. "Apparently," Mr. Walters complained, "ABC couldn't find a grandmother on death row for carrying a roach clip in her purse." Mr. Walters's point was that cases like Mr. Montgomery's are atypical. "Federal inmates convicted of marijuana trafficking," he noted, "were involved on average in the sale of 3.5 tons of pot." This is worth noting; but so is the fact that the government *occasionally* throws people in prison for taking medicine. Something is seriously wrong with a drug policy that condones such treatment—a point the drug warriors tacitly acknowledge by changing the subject.

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With Queen Elizabeth while Bill
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We have tested the Controller driving irons on a hitting machine and with every imaginable kind of golfer, from sixth grade kids to lanky six-foot-six pros. We *know* that the Controllers are the longest and easiest-to-hit clubs you can own. But you must see for yourself; so if you don't have time for a full round, hit the Controller–Tee Shot just three times against your driver and the Controller–Fairway driving iron three times against your 3-wood.

Those six shots are going to change your life! No more worrying about duffing shots off the tee, or hitting ground balls off the fairway. Instantly, you are playing down the middle, *way down* the middle. The time has come to put your woods in the cellar, and enter a new world of golf. Here, for the first time, is driver power with iron accuracy. *Plus this incredible fail-safe system!*

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If you hit off the toe or heel of an ordinary iron you will get a vicious hook or slice. Not so with the Controller driving irons! These two clubs have a patented, fail-safe system we call the "invisible curve". This new patented design *tames* the abnormal spin imparted to the ball by a toe shot or heel shot. Instead of hooking or slicing into someone's backyard, your shot curves back toward the pin! It's an incredible sight and you can see it for yourself by purposely mis-hitting the ball.

THIS, PLUS THE CONTROLLER'S EXTRA 30–50 YARDS, AND YOU ARE VIRTUALLY GUARANTEED TO CUT 5–10 STROKES OFF YOUR GAME.

Here are more reasons why the Controller driving irons are going to give you the best golf of your life...

- They give you the power of a driver with control of an iron...
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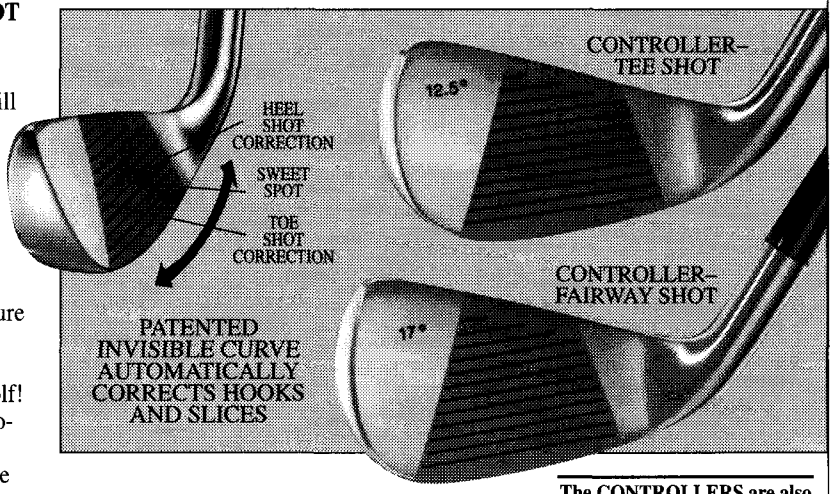

- The Controller-Tee Shot's 12.5° loft gets the ball up faster than a driver...
- The Controller-Fairway's 17° loft gets the ball up faster than a 3-wood...
- They let you carry two more precision clubs (wedge, chipper) without exceeding the 14-club limit (by eliminating woods)...

And their 100% carbon-graphite shaft models add *8–10% more distance.*

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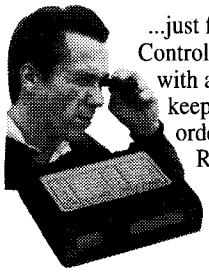

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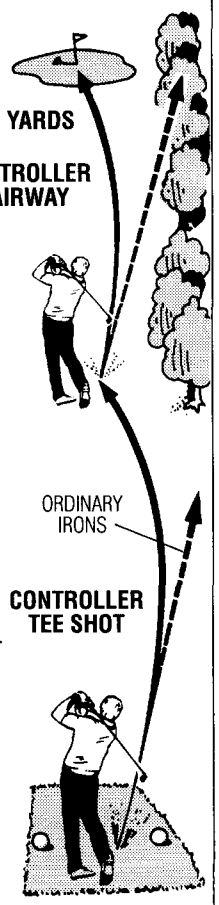

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Note: Random Walk, which appears on the contents page, was pulled at the last moment to accommodate the John Chamberlain obituary.

■ A major advance in criminal justice has been reported at the Dade County courthouse in Miami, where employees daily sweep up dead chickens and goats, charms, voodoo powders, and other instruments of Haitian-style legal defense. Could this explain the turmoil in the O.J. jury?

■ Hot on the heels of the GOP's capture of Congress, *ABC World News Tonight* has unveiled a new segment, "For the Record," designed to ferret out congressmen who engage in exaggeration, false statistics, misleading anecdotes, and other evils. The inaugural segment focused on Representative John Mica (R., Fla.), who alleged that certain Occupational Safety and Health Administration regulations forbid kids to take pulled teeth home from the dentist, and that others compel dentists to keep logs for possession and disposal of white-out. Wild congressional exaggeration, right? Actually, OSHA's Blood Borne Pathogen Standard labels bodily tissues as biohazards. Teeth are considered tissue, and technically must therefore be placed in a red bag and picked up by a licensed disposer. Furthermore, because certain brands of white-out contain toluene, OSHA requires that Manufacturers Safety Data Sheets be kept in office files. Dr. Edward Stein, a health scientist at OSHA, says that white-out's levels of toluene are far below those which concern OSHA and that the requirement does not pertain to offices with fewer than 10 people. However, he concedes that if an individual in an office with fewer than 10 people filed a complaint about white-out, OSHA would be free to investigate. As for the teeth? A dentist in the Northeast refused to return a tooth to a 6-year-old boy because he was concerned about the health regulation. OSHA's unofficial position is that this was unnecessary. However, the regulation *does* require such action. For the Record.

■ Two comedians have been elected governors of Japan's two largest cities, Tokyo and Osaka. Japanese voters discovered that it doesn't take a professional politician to stand up and make a fool of himself.

■ Is Senator D'Amato running for governor of Kobe?

After the 100 Days

NEWT Gingrich just completed one of the most remarkable political sprints in American history, from the promulgation of the Contract with America last fall to the end of the 100 days. Ahead of him now is the long march on the federal budget, the success of which will determine whether the last seven months were an overture, or an episode.

With some exceptions—the anti-abortion language stripped from the rescissions bill is perhaps the starkest—the Republicans maintained remarkable unanimity over the first 100 days. Welfare reform was supposed to be the diciest item in the Contract: wayward GOP moderates, it was thought, would compel Gingrich to scramble for the votes of conservative Democrats. In the event, all but five Republicans voted for the bill. Then, tax cuts seemed headed for a meltdown after more than 100 Republicans signed a letter asking for a vote to lower the eligibility cap from $200,000 to $95,000. The leadership stood down that threat, then won recalcitrant moderates with a deficit-reduction fig leaf. All Republicans save 11 voted for the bill. Moderates may begin grousing in earnest when the tough spending votes come—Ernest Istook and twenty-some other conservatives have begun meeting every Tuesday to counteract the moderate "Lunch Bunch"—but the leadership has so far demonstrated an ability to corral them when it counts.

It helps when history seems to be moving your way. Take Oregon Senator Bob Packwood. He's a moderate who, not surprisingly, opposes tax cuts. But the rest of his positions have begun to acquire a conservative edge. Packwood says he wants to balance the budget by 2002, is ready to cut $250 billion from Medicare and Medicaid, intends to find $60 billion of savings in welfare programs, and is open to the idea of a flat tax. If only George Bush had been so moderate. The dynamic can be seen most strikingly in the welfare debate. In 1993 Republicans offered a welfare bill slightly to the right of, but essentially compatible with, the reforms touted by President Clinton. The GOP bill became more conservative in the Contract with America. Then it moved even further right before it finally passed in March. As an alternative, Democrats united behind a bill sponsored by Georgia Democrat Nathan Deal that was to the right of the original Republican proposal and in some respects tougher than the Contract. Then, Mr. Deal switched parties—a New Deal all round.

Republicans will have to keep things moving this way if they are to win the coming budget fight. The Contract commanded 70 per cent public support and asked little in the way of public sacrifice. The tough work on spending was left to the Balanced Budget Amendment. Now the GOP has to confront—without the cover of the amendment—what George Will calls the cognitive dissonance of the American people: their dual devotion to limited government and to all the various government services that benefit them. That means hitting Medicare for the elderly, cutting subsidies for farmers, reining in all the programs enjoyed by the middle class. It means a Federal Government that can say, "Stop," after six decades of saying nothing but, "Have some more." Newt Gingrich understands the transformation in American politics that

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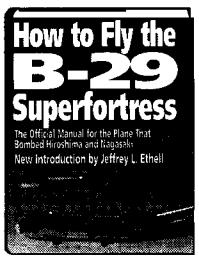
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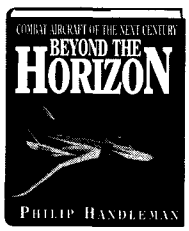

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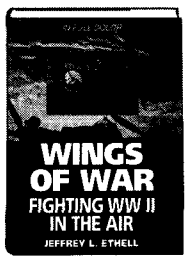

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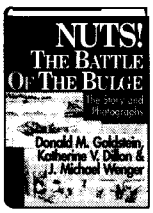

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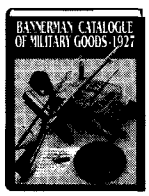

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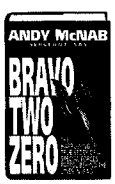

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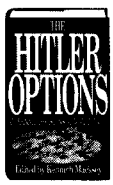

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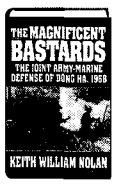

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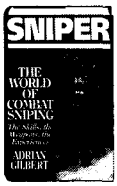

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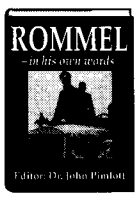

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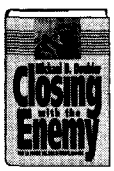

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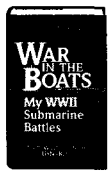

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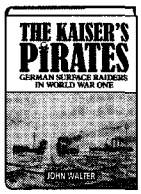

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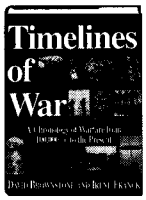

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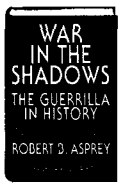

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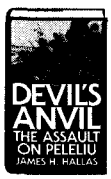

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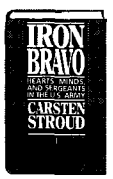

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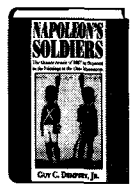

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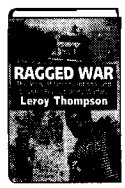

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this entails. If he effects it, he goes from great sprinter to epic marathon man.

Memo to: BC
From: [Confidential]

YOU GOTTA hand it to Newt Gingrich. Don't get me wrong—if his heart was on fire, I wouldn't . . . pour water down his throat. But he's whipping you, and you're not getting any help from your party.

Dick Gephardt's response to Gingrich's TV address was a disaster. What was his first counter-proposal? "We can start with health care . . ." *Health care!* Biggest debacle of your first two years! I know, Stan Greenberg's polls showed it was a winner. But I also know, when you're in a hole, quit digging. Someone tell Dick Do-Right.

Then there was Jesse (our Jesse, not theirs). He said Gingrich was giving us "Reaganism and Reaganomics warmed over." Now that wasn't very bright, was it? Sure Reagan wrecked the country, but he also won two elections, and a third for that pipsqueak we beat. Do we want to wait till 2008 before we get back in again? Yelling about school lunches energizes your base, but that's only 43 per cent of the vote. If Perot doesn't run again, you're headed for Carter–Mondale–Dukakis. Benjamin Disraeli (see, I do read) once said he caught the Whigs bathing and ran away with their clothes. Sounds like a line about Paula Jones I was polishing, but let's stick with Dizzy. What can we . . . *appropriate* . . . to appeal to the GOP–Perot vote?

—*Affirmative action.* The problem is to put maximum daylight between you and affirmative action, without losing Jesse altogether. You're off to an okay start, by confusing the issue: you don't want to lose the gains of blacks and women, but you feel the pain of white males. You can't do much better than this, given the polarities, but you can be even more confusing. How about a New Deal for Justice? "We need to help the disadvantaged of *all* races and sexes . . ." Sounds gutless, but the Republicans won't be much bolder.

—*Immigration.* I know this is a toughie, but you're no easy assignment yourself. The Republicans won't fight this one either, whatever luck Pete Wilson had with it. Theme: "We want to help the folks who built the ship, instead of swamping it." Tell Cisneros if we don't do something, he won't be secretary of diddly.

—*Term limits.* The rubes—just kidding—are still steamed over this. The Republicans laid a big one, calling for term limits, then not coming through. Say you want 'em now, *starting* with incumbents. Let Teddy squeal. You've got term limits already.

Two, if you're lucky.

The Speaker Strikes a Nerve

Jerking smartly from the tap
Newt applied to each knee cap,
Clinton's tootsies hit a chair
As Dick Gephardt's fanned the air
Like prop planes until they catch,
While Newt, with game, set, and match,
Passed the torch to Mr. Dole,
Straining on the greasy pole.

W. H. VON DREELE

Guatemala's Scandal—And Ours

IN 1990, Guatemalan soldiers killed Michael DeVine, an American running a hotel in Guatemala. In 1992, a Communist guerrilla named Efrain Bamaca was captured by the Guatemalan army. Bamaca's common-law wife, an American leftist, named Jennifer Harbury, for a long time believed he was still alive and used her Harvard law degree and hunger strikes to get press coverage for his case.

She was assisted by Representative Robert Torricelli (D., N.J.), who chaired the House Western Hemisphere Subcommittee until last November, and who went to the press with explosive accusations of direct CIA involvement in these two deaths. It looks as if his information is dead wrong, and his allegations were flatly rejected by Acting CIA Director William Studeman.

Meanwhile, Arlen Specter's Senate Select Committee on Intelligence held a rare public hearing on April 5. Questioning Administration witnesses, the senators seemed to be competing to see which could be most arrogant; Bob Kerrey of Nebraska won hands down. The hearing also let Specter display his characteristic certainty that everything he says is brilliant.

Showboating apart, the first issue is whether the CIA should maintain liaisons with bad people (the Guatemalan army certainly qualifies). During the Cold War one could argue that whatever the human-rights abuses of such an army, we needed its help to combat the Soviet/Cuban threat. Today we have other interests in Guatemala, such as keeping it from becoming a depot for Colombian drug-traffickers. When does an intelligence source need to be cut off because his usefulness is outweighed by the repellent nature of his conduct? This is a serious matter that should be discussed among responsible professionals. Witch hunts will only scare CIA field employees into breaking with any source who is not a Mormon.

The second issue is what information the CIA should

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Ignore the Left Jabs.

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The Washington Times

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REPUBLICANS BY A KNOCKOUT

Clinton, Democratic policies rejected beyond Beltway

New Whitewater hearings likely

By Jerry Seper
THE WASHINGTON TIMES

Having wrested control of Congress from the Democrats, Republicans are expected next year to renew their call for comprehensive hearings into Whitewater – an effort that was thwarted this year.

But the new inquiry could reach beyond the Senate and House banking committees, which held limited hearings last summer, to include the appointment of a select committee to investigate President Clinton's ties to a failed Arkansas thrift and a real estate partnership.

"We've not yet heard anyone specifically suggest the appointment of a select committee, but look at the mix, the gumbo that has become Whitewater, and think about the breadth of jurisdiction," said one key GOP official.

"There are legitimate questions rightfully within the domain of several committees – Agriculture, Energy, Commerce, the

see HEARINGS, page 7

The morning after:

President Clinton discusses his party's devastating losses at a news conference Nov. 9 at the White House.

Voters realign the government

By Donald Lambro
THE WASHINGTON TIMES

Angry voters pounded President Clinton, his party and his liberal message at the midterm, sweeping Democrats from power in Congress and turning the government in a sharply conservative direction.

Every poll of the past several months showed that voters were fed up with just about everything the government was doing, from higher taxes to more spending, and Nov. 8 they turned that anger on the Democrats with a vengeance.

In a politically realigning election of historic proportions, voters sent a strong message of support for the Republicans' tax reduction and budget-cutting platform.

And the president who was elected two years ago on a platform of change was rebuffed for practicing the same old brand of liberal Democratic politics rather than the New Democrat policies he preached on the campaign trail.

For the first time in 40 years, Republicans were poised to wrest control of both houses of the Con-

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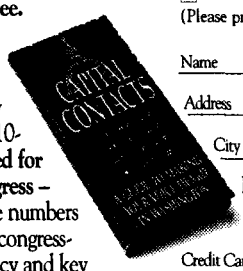

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impart in sensitive cases such as these. It appears that a Guatemalan officer who was a paid CIA informant (Colonel Julio Alpirez) helped cover up the murder of Michael DeVine by some of his colleagues, and was involved more directly in the killing of Efrain Bamaca. It also appears that the CIA told the Justice Department about this and sought its guidance, but told little or nothing to the State Department, or to the Intelligence Committees, or to Mrs. DeVine or Miss Harbury.

There was no excuse for keeping the U.S. Embassy in the dark. With recent history in mind, it was amazingly stupid to keep the Intelligence Committees uninformed. Admiral Studeman apologized for the latter, and for the former the ambassador sent the CIA station chief home. But what to tell the two widows? Mrs. DeVine's husband was an innocent American citizen murdered by the Guatemalan army, and national self-respect as well as sympathy for her should have inspired an all-out search for his killers. In fact, they were found and convicted, but the highest ranking (an army captain named Contreras) escaped the day of his sentencing. It seems clear that his army friends helped him, and the Guatemalan army deserves our contempt, not our assistance. The rule has to be, Kill an American and you pay for it—and go on paying until all the guilty are punished. This is a Guatemalan scandal, not an American one.

Mr. Bamaca, on the other hand, was a Guatemalan guerrilla at war with his government. His group was particularly murderous, and he died as he lived. Ordinarily his death would be of little interest to the U.S. Government. Miss Harbury, however, has made it a *cause célèbre*. U.S. authorities at all times told her what they thought was the bottom line—that Mr. Bamaca was very likely dead—but gave her no other information about their sources or their conclusions. In retrospect, that surely was the correct decision.

There *is* an American scandal in the case, but it is not in Langley or in the jungle. After its public hearing, the Senate Intelligence Committee piously went into secret session so that CIA officers could "tell the whole truth" and "re-establish our trust." Half an hour after the hearing adjourned, Chairman Specter was on *MacNeil–Lehrer* talking about it, and the next day's *Washington Post* revealed what CIA witnesses had said. If Senator Specter is serious about re-establishing trust, let him call in the FBI to investigate those leaks, and let the chips fall where they may.

Meanwhile, Representative Torricelli admitted that he chose to violate his oath of secrecy as a House Intelligence Committee member and reveal information (or at least accusations) learned in that capacity. If Intelligence Committee members are free to decide when to publicize top-secret information, their secrecy pledges are worth nothing, and the system of congressional oversight must be scrapped. Torricelli had plenty of options if he suspected illegal CIA action, but only one that offered him TV appearances and approving *New York Times* editorials. The House Ethics Committee should have him kicked off the Intelligence Committee. We can't police Guatemala, but we ought to be able to knock heads on Capitol Hill.

Mom and Sis Abroad

They smiled atop an elephant,
  Heads hidden in a shawl,
They posed before the Taj Mahal
  And later had a ball
In rank bazaars where holy men
  Could use a dab of Ban,
But how this helped beleaguered Dad
  Beats pundits on C-SPAN.

W. H. VON DREELE

Hot Air in Berlin

THE just-ended United Nations Climate Conference in Berlin saw governments of 130 countries discussing how to share the pain of internationally agreed and legally enforced reductions in carbon-dioxide emissions. In case you're feeling hazy, CO_2 is the poisonous stuff we all breathe out—and that we also generate by the combustion of oil, gas, or coal in motor vehicles, heating, power plants, and various industrial processes. The host, German chancellor Helmut Kohl, set the apocalyptic tone by saying that drastically reducing CO_2 output was vital to "guarantee a life worth living in the twenty-first century and beyond."

Though the Berlin conference reached an impasse on how to distribute the pain, it did agree to establish a UN Climate Change Secretariat in Bonn. The two simple questions no one was impolite enough to raise were: Are these CO_2 "greenhouse" gases really a dread menace? Is global warming for real?

The George C. Marshall Institute of Washington, D.C., recently surveyed the latest scientific literature on global warming and the latest temperature data. Its report is quite measured. It tries at every stage to give the benefit of the doubt to those who fear that global warming is a real threat. And after an exhaustive examination of all the permutations of the alarmists' logic, the Institute concludes that "the temperature increase produced in the twenty-first century by greenhouse gases of manmade origin will be relatively minor—almost certainly less than 1° Celsius—and indistinguishable from natural fluctuations of climate. . . . . Sufficient evidence has accumulated on the small size of the manmade greenhouse effect to make it plain that no scientific justification now exists for

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economically punishing policies aimed at global reductions in the emission of carbon dioxide."

How so? Through erroneous assumptions about feedbacks and other climate phenomena, the computer modeling used to generate scare scenarios of global warming overestimates the greenhouse effect by about a factor of three. Mankind has been increasing CO_2 concentrations in the atmosphere for a while, in effect carrying out an experiment, as the Institute puts it, which indicates roughly how the earth's climate responds to an increase in greenhouse gases. "The results of this experiment are now in: satellites have taken the earth's temperature [and it is rising at] 0.1° for the 1980s and 1990s. This is three times smaller

Right Data

Pure Politics

NEWT Gingrich's tax cut "is not about alleviating onerous tax burdens, sparking investment or any other lofty purpose. It is a political maneuver." Hard evidence for this, continues the *New York Times*, lies in an "inconvenient fact" long ignored by Republicans: the U.S. already has the next to lowest tax rate among the 24 leading industrialized nations. Shall we emulate our competition?

A tax rate of 31.6 per cent was enough to trigger tax cuts in the United States. Europeans, by contrast, have for years shrugged off rates higher than 45 per cent. Indeed, tax rates in most European nations are going up again this year. Apparently the political risks of cutting job training or unemployment-insurance benefits exceed those of raising additional revenues. For their part, European taxpayers often cite lower crime rates, cleaner streets, more reliable mass transit, and generally less unstable societies as the pay-off for confiscatory tax rates.

An Inverse Correlation: Taxes and Prosperity

	Taxes as % of GDP (1994)	Per Capita GDP (1992)	Unemployment Rate (1994)	Long Term Unemployed*
U.S.	31.6%	$23,637	6.1%	11.2%
Japan	33.4	20,925	2.9	15.3
Germany	46.1	20,840	9.6	45.5
UK	36.4	16,929	9.4	28.1
France	49.6	19,283	12.6	36.1
Italy	46.3	17,996	11.3	67.1

* Percentage of unemployed out of work for more than 12 months.
Source: OECD.

But the economic fallout is now threatening that stability. The unemployment trend tells the story. In the early 1980s unemployment was less than 4 per cent in Germany, the UK, and most other Western European nations. Now it averages more than 10 per cent, with Spain at a high of 24 per cent. Japan's rate is kept artificially low by the make-work jobs associated with that nation's lifetime employment policies. By contrast, the U.S. unemployment rate has trended downward since 1982.

Scarier still is the long-term unemployment situation. In 1992 about 45 per cent of Europe's unemployed had been out of work for more than 12 months, versus 11 per cent in the United States. Mass long-term unemployment is possible only if the government subsidizes it. That is exactly what we find in Europe. A 40-year-old single worker, writes Hoover Institution economist David Henderson, can collect unemployment benefits equal to 59 per cent of his prior earnings in France, 58 per cent in Germany, and 70 per cent in the Netherlands. German manufacturing workers cost their employers about $27 per hour. About half of this reflects Social Security, unemployment insurance, disability insurance, and other taxes. In America labor costs $16 per hour; less than one-quarter of this comes from taxes.

So why should we worry? Because our apparently stellar unemployment performance is due in part to a dramatic slowdown in the number of people looking for work. The U.S. labor force grew by only 0.8 per cent in 1994 and 1993, compared to 1.34 per cent in 1992 and an average of 1.63 per cent between 1981 and 1989. It's no coincidence that 1993 was also the year the Clinton Administration raised the earned-income tax credit—a wage subsidy that declines rapidly as income rises. Marginal tax rates for high-income families also went up, and the Medicare tax cap was removed in 1994, putting the highest federal tax rate at 42.5 per cent. And Social Security recipients earning more than a modest amount started paying tax on 85 per cent of their benefits that year.

Our tax rates are low only in comparison to postwar Europe's. In 1948 federal, state, and local taxes took 23 per cent of GDP, or about 30 per cent less than today. A study by Gerald Scully of the University of Texas shows that had we maintained that low tax rate American productivity would not have slipped, and GDP would be twice as large as it is today. Reason enough for the U.S. not to follow Europe down the high-tax road.

—Ed Rubenstein

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than the global rise predicted by the computer simulations. . . . Which are more trustworthy—the measured temperatures or the computer predictions?"

The report of this think tank deserves to be taken very seriously indeed. The Institute is led by some of America's most distinguished scientists—Frederick Seitz, a past president of the National Academy of Sciences; Robert Jastrow, founder and retired director of the Goddard Institute for Space Studies; and William Nierenberg, a former director of the Scripps Institute of Oceanography, among others. So much for the "scientific consensus" that Al Gore says exists on the menace of greenhouse gases.

Why then do we rely so heavily on such fallible models? The idea of "global warming" has spawned an entire international industry of agitation, business-bashing, guilt-mongering, and bureaucracy-building. It won't easily be affected by facts and logic. The mother of all scares is seen by the Left as the last best hope for salvaging economic planning from the rubble of the Berlin Wall. The truly dangerous gas in the atmosphere is socialism.

The U.S. Congress should continue to finance research into climate changes (perhaps at reduced levels), and it should hold more hearings on the results. Many good scientists have risked their own funding to publish findings at variance with the scare-mongers. The only way to make further progress is by continuing to shine the light of science on the subject, as the Marshall Institute has done. So the Congress should insist that any future conferences funded by taxpayers address the central issue: Is there a real problem? Meanwhile, "not one cent" to the UN Climate Change Secretariat in Bonn.

Quo Vadis?

IN HIS encyclical *Evangelium Vitae*, the Pope pits that "Gospel of Life" against a "culture of death" that he sees overshadowing the developed world. Even those who disagree with him on specific questions will find the moral thrust of what he has to say on such matters as euthanasia compelling and characteristically clear. On one question, however, confusion has crept in. Early press reports suggested that Cardinal Ratzinger said a small paragraph in the encyclical, concerning the death penalty, was such a "development" of Catholic teaching that a passage in the recent *Universal Catechism of the Catholic Church* would have to be rewritten. Was the Church recalling a defective product, one approved only months before by the Pope himself?

Not that the new *Catechism* is without difficulty on the subject of capital punishment. In one section, #2266, it reaffirms the traditional view, held since the Council of Trent, that the death penalty is a legitimate punishment for the state to inflict, "commensurate with the gravity of the crime." However, another section, #2267, offers the admonition—less doctrinal, because it speaks of what is to be "preferred," rather than what is strictly required—that we should employ "bloodless means" of punishment when possible. Thus the tension: it is acceptable to execute because a person deserves it as a matter of justice, and the state may do so, but it is good and preferable to be merciful, because the "dignity of the human person" invites it. The fact that these remarks are eminently Christian does not make them any less confusing as practical and political advice.

With the new admonitions from the Pope in *Evangelium Vitae*, moreover, liberal Catholics—often weak on its far clearer teachings about abortion, artificial contraception, and euthanasia—have seized on John Paul's brief remarks to argue (as, indeed, *he* does) that there are almost no circumstances, thanks to a reorganization of the penal system, in which it is right to carry out the death penalty. Oh, the irony of such respect for papal authority at the *National Catholic Reporter*!

With all respect to the Pope, however, this generalization about the penal system appears cryptic and unsatisfying. What exactly has changed in prisons in recent years? Very little. One gets the impression, moreover, that irrespective of prison conditions, the Pope is sweeping the entire teaching about capital punishment under a rubric of "self-defense." That is, capital crime may be punished with only the force necessary to protect ourselves, the public, lest we fall into the sin of vengeance; and capital punishment is not "necessary" where there is life imprisonment. But this is a prudential judgment—and one that does not seem supported by the evidence. Life imprisonment has always been available. Murder rates have been rising rapidly in Western societies at a time when it has been the main or sole punishment for murder. Indeed, convicted murderers quite often murder again either in prison, or on parole, or if they manage to escape. We are more, not less, in need of effective "self-defense."

For most Americans, this is the very stuff of democratic debate, and they will either cite or contradict the Pope as it suits them. For Catholics, however, a particular problem arises. In the traditional teaching, self-defense is a matter of justice, not of mercy, even for states. Is the Pope now saying, with doctrinal authority, that only the mercy of life imprisonment is just? At first reading, this seems to be a replacement, not a development, of a doctrine Catholics have understood, based on teachings from Trent to the *Universal Catechism*, as declaring that the state acts "justly" in capital punishment. Or is he speaking prudentially? In which case, Catholics are free to take a different view after prayer and reflection. Perhaps the Vatican will in due course bring to this matter the same clarity exhibited in the rest of the encyclical.

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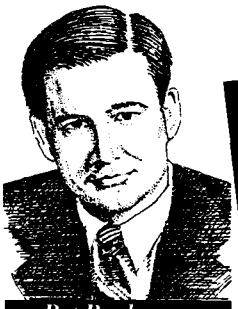
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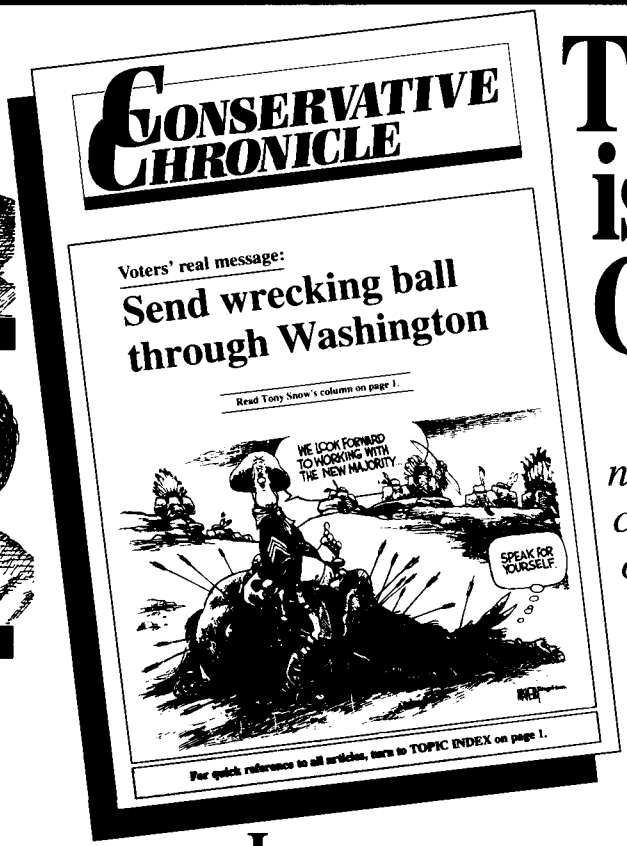
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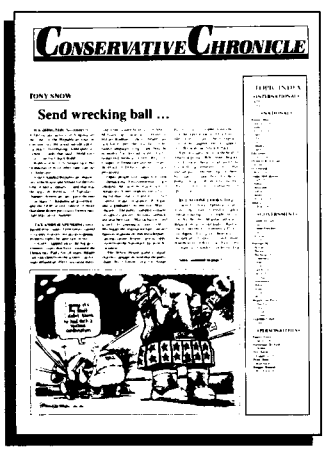

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John Chamberlain, RIP

LATE ONE afternoon in the fall of 1955, on the eve of the appearance of the first issue of NATIONAL REVIEW, something people more loftily situated would have called a "summit conference" was set in New York City, for which purpose a tiny suite in the Commodore Hotel was engaged. Tensions—ideological and personal—had arisen, and the fleeting presence in New York of Whittaker Chambers, who had dangled before us in an altogether self-effacing way the prospect that he might come out of retirement to join the fledgling enterprise, prompted me to bring the principals together for a meeting which had no specific agenda, being designed primarily to reaffirm the common purpose. As I think back on it, two of the five people present were born troublemakers. To say this about someone is not to dismiss him as merely that: Socrates was a troublemaker, so was Thomas Edison. But troublemaking was not what was primarily needed to distill unity, and so, one half hour after the meeting began, things were not going smoothly.

And then, when it was nearly six o'clock and I thought I detected in Chambers a look of terminal exasperation, John Chamberlain showed up, briefcase in one hand, a pair of figure skates in the other. He mumbled (he almost always mumbled) his apology . . . He had booked the practice time at the ice rink for himself and his daughters . . . The early afternoon editorial meeting had been protracted, the traffic difficult . . . No thanks, he didn't want anything to drink—was there any iced tea? He stole a second or two to catch up on Whittaker's family, and then sat back to participate in a conference—which had been transformed by his presence at it. When a few days later Chambers wrote, he remarked the sheer "goodness" of John Chamberlain, a quality that no man or woman, living or dead, has ever to my knowledge disputed.

At the time a sharp difference had arisen, not between me and John Chamberlain, but between Willi Schlamm and John's wife, Peggy (RIP). Schlamm viewed the projected magazine as a magnetic field, professional affiliation with which could no more be denied by the few to whom the call was tendered than a call to serve as one of the Twelve Apostles. Poor Peggy would not stand for it: John was then serving as an editor of *Barron's* magazine and as a writer for the *Wall Street Journal*. Before that he had been with *The Freeman*, before that with *Life*, before that *Fortune*, before that the *New York Times*. In each of these enterprises he had achieved singularity. He had two daughters not yet grown up. How could anyone reasonably ask that now, in middle age, he detach himself from a secure position to throw in with NATIONAL REVIEW—an enterprise whose working capital would not have seen *Life* magazine through a single issue, or *Barron's* through a dozen, and whose editor-in-chief was not long out of school?

I like to remind myself that I did not figure even indirectly in the protracted negotiation, respecting, as I did, not only the eminence of John Chamberlain, but also the altogether understandable desire of his wife for just a little economic security. But Willi was very nearly (nothing ever proved so conclusively shocking to Willi) struck dumb with shock, the thought that NATIONAL REVIEW might be created without John Chamberlain as a senior editor. That was one of the clouds that hung over that late-afternoon discussion, in which Willmoore Kendall exploited every opportunity to add fuel to the fire, principally by the device of suggesting that for *some* people security means *everything*; the kind of thing John did not wish to hear, among other reasons because it so inexactly reflected his own priorities—he was concerned not with security, but with domestic tranquillity.

So it went, and in one form or another the tensions continued, though they never proved crippling. John settled the problem by moonlighting—as lead reviewer for NATIONAL REVIEW. But I learned then, during that tense afternoon, the joy of a definitively pacific presence. Ours might have been a meeting to discuss whether to dump the bomb on Hiroshima; and John Chamberlain's presence would have brought to such a meeting, whatever its outcome, a sense of inner peace, manliness, and self-confidence.

There are stories John never told, even in his memoirs published a dozen years ago. That was characteristic. Bertrand de Jouvenel once told me, in a luncheon devoted to discussing our common friend Willmoore Kendall, that any subject at all is more interesting than oneself. I am not absolutely convinced that this is so—because some people know no other subject so thoroughly as themselves. But with John

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Chamberlain self-neglect was an attribute not of manners, but of personality. When NATIONAL REVIEW started up, six weeks after our Commodore summit, he would come in to the office every week (the magazine was then a weekly), sit down at whatever typewriter was free, and type out the lead book review with that quiet confidence exhibited by sea captains when they extricate their huge liners from their hectic municipal slips to begin an ocean voyage. After 45 minutes or so a definitive book review was done; and John would, quietly, leave, lest he disrupt the office.

In those days "the office" consisted of six or seven cubicles, each one with desk and typewriter. Most of *NR*'s top editorial staffers—James Burnham, Willi Schlamm, Willmoore Kendall, Whittaker Chambers, Frank Meyer—from the beginning on, served only part time, so that at any given moment at least one cubicle was unoccupied, though seldom the same one. Four or five months into the magazine's life a young graduate of Smith, age 24, serving in the circulation department, complained to her classmate, my sister Maureen, that the repairman who came once a week to check the typewriters had not once serviced her own. We couldn't wait to tell John Chamberlain, the delinquent typewriter repairman, when he came in the following Tuesday. He laughed heartily, then sat down to write an illuminating review of the entire fictional work of Mary McCarthy.

I NEVER saw him, during the 1930s, slide into his chair at the *New York Times* to write his daily book reviews, many of them masterpieces of the form. Nor at *Fortune*, where he would return from two weeks on the road to write what he called a "long piece," which would prove the definitive article on this or that intricate problem of management or labor. Nor at *Life*, where he presided over the editorial page that was Henry Luce's personal cockpit, from which he spoke out, through John, to God and man in authoritative, not to say authoritarian, accents. But I decline to believe that in any of these roles, or in any of the myriad others he filled—as professor at Columbia, as dean of journalism at Troy State University in Alabama, as a book writer or a columnist—John Chamberlain ever did anything more disruptive than merely greet whoever stood in the way, and amble over to wherever the nearest typewriter was, there to execute his craft: maintaining standards as high as any set by any critical contemporary.

Because John Chamberlain could not sing off key. And the combination of a gentle nature and a hard Yankee mind brought forth prose pure and lasting. His was a voice of reason, from an affable man, unacquainted with affectation, deeply committed to the cause of his country and to liberty. He believed the fate of his country co-extensive with that of civilization; and, certainly, with that of his two daughters from his first marriage, and of his son—a young poet—from his second, to the enchanting Ernestine, to whom he went soon after Peggy's untimely death.

John Chamberlain's memoirs were surely the most soft-throated in the literature of men who took passionate political positions. As a young man who had demonstrated his prowess as a critic (William Lyon Phelps called him the "finest critic of his generation"), and as a political thinker manifestly addicted to progress, he wrote his book *A Farewell to Reform*, in which he seemed to give up on organic change, suggesting the advantages of radical alternatives. But his idealism was never superordinated to his intelligence, and in the balance of that decade of the Thirties, and then in that of the Forties, Chamberlain never ceased to look at the data, which carefully he integrated in his productive mind. Along the line (he tells us) he read three books, so to speak at one gulp—and the refractory little tumblers closed, after which he became what is now denominated a "conservative." The books in question, by the three furies of modern libertarianism—Isabel Paterson, Rose Wilder Lane, Ayn Rand—provided the needed cement. After that, he ceased to be surprised by evidence, now become redundant; evidence that the marketplace really works, really performs social functions, really helps live human beings with live problems.

His writings told the story of his journey through this century. His calmness and lucidity, his acquiescent handling of experience, free of ideological entanglement, provoked in the reader the kind of confidence that John Chamberlain throughout his long life provoked in his friends. But his friendships would never run any risk of corrupting the purity of his ongoing search, through poetry, fiction, economic texts, corporate reports, and—yes—seed catalogues, for just the right formulation of what may be acknowledged as the American proposition. He sought an equilibrium of forces that would foster the best that could be got out of the jealous, contentious, self-indulgent, uproarious breed of men and women that have made so exciting a world here, giving issue, in one of America's finest moments, to a splendid man.

I LAST saw him at a little party given in a noisy New York hotel to celebrate his 90th birthday. My sister Priscilla sat next to him, and I was with the proud and lovely Ernestine. I reflected on my first meeting with him. He came to the little house in which I had written *God and Man at Yale*, the manuscript of which had been sent him by the publisher Henry Regnery. It was inconceivable to me that he would consent to write an introduction to a book so disruptive in the circles in which he lived. The purpose of his call—he was the editorial-page editor of *Life*—was to say, Yes, he would write the introduction. We were friends for 45 years, during all of which we knew his goodness. The staff of NATIONAL REVIEW joins in extending our sympathy to his wife and family. **—WFB**

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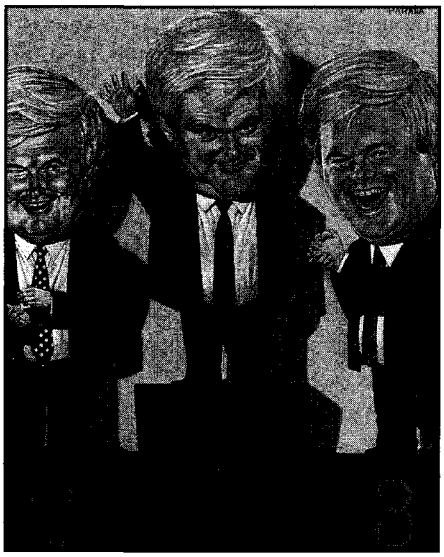
ON THE SCENE

Whole Lotta Shakin' Goin' On

LAWRENCE KUDLOW



Roberto Parada

WASHINGTON, D.C.

THE mainstream press has grudgingly conceded that the House GOP kept its promise by voting on all ten items in the Contract with America, including congressonal accountability, the Balanced Budget Amendment, the line-item veto, unfunded mandates, crime control, tax cuts, welfare reform, legal reform, and regulatory relief. Only term limits failed, and they were supported by 85 per cent of the Republican members.

But the press is still selling the misleading story that most of the House proposals will never make it through the Senate, and those few that do pass the upper chamber will be wisely vetoed by President Clinton. Nonsense. Just look at the $17-billion House rescission bill sent up to the Senate just before the Easter recess. Left-wing senators such as Ted Kennedy, Tom Harkin, and Barbara Boxer did their best to bottle up the new budget cuts, while the White House ordered executive agencies and departments to accelerate the spending of all unused balances. Yet the Senate ultimately passed a $16-billion rescission, $3 billion above the original goal, *and passed it by a vote of 99 to 0.* Although the Senate restored some undesirable spending that the House had cut [see The Week, p. 14], the rescission vote has to be seen as a good omen.

Then there is the new-found fervor of Senate Majority Leader Robert Dole, who has become a born-again supply-sider, publicly insisting that the Senate will pass a tax cut. Suddenly, recalcitrant Senate Finance Chairman Robert Packwood, who a week earlier had ruled out tax cuts unless the budget was balanced first, recanted, telling the *Washington Post*, "I guess we will be cutting taxes this year."

Dole's presidential announcement speech in Topeka sounded an awful lot like the Contract with America. He opened by saying that "as a young man in a small town, my parents taught me to put trust in God, not government, and never confuse the two." He also said, "Let me make one fundamental belief crystal clear. We can cut taxes and balance the budget." As a clincher, Dole signed the same anti-tax pledge, originally formulated by Grover Norquist of Americans for Tax Reform, that he refused to sign in 1988, a move that lost him the New Hampshire primary and the GOP nomination.

Dole's rivalry with Texas Senator Phil Gramm for the presidential nomination this year will be an important factor as the Senate considers the Contract items. Gramm, a tough conservative, is more than ready to challenge Dole on selling out the Contract. Any missteps by Dole will turn into primary ammunition for Gramm.

Dole's chief lieutenant, Majority Whip Trent Lott, predicts the Senate will produce stronger legislation than the House in several areas, including tougher work rules for welfare recipients and better habeas-corpus and exclusionary-rule reforms. Like Dole, Lott believes the Senate will pass a tax-cut bill that includes capital-gains tax relief, the child credit, a higher earnings limit for seniors, and repeal of the marriage penalty. Lott is also hearing strong support for regulatory relief and tort reform from his constituents. "Passage of the Contract is a major event," he says. "One long-haired shipyard worker came up to me to say we'll have thirty years of Republican majority now that the baby-boomers have finally seen the light."

THE last hope of the liberal news media is that President Clinton will save the nation by vetoing the Contract. Gingrich & Co. plan to discourage the veto strategy by denying the Federal Government authority to borrow more than the current debt ceiling unless the entire reconciliation package passes. This year's reconciliation package will be the largest in history, including not only the tax and budget cuts but also welfare reform, entitlement restructuring, regulatory reform, and other parts of the Contract.

With reconciliation linked to the debt ceiling, "the President's mind will be much more focused on the consequences of a government-wide shutdown," says a top Gingrich fiscal advisor. Unlike in the early 1980s, when Ronald Reagan could not manage a shutdown for more than 24 hours, Newt Gingrich not only wants to use this club but may be forced to do so by militant House freshmen who will not vote for a debt-ceiling increase unless all their Contract conditions are satisfied. White House operatives are painfully aware that a government shutdown would severely hurt the President, creating a strong sense that no one is in charge.

But Gingrich & Co.'s plans extend further than the end of the fiscal year. A little-noticed document called "On the Horizon: Legislative Issues for the Post-Contract Period" proposes 19 additional legislative items, including banking reform, repeal of the striker-replacement executive order and the Davis–Bacon Act, telecommunications reform, health-care reform, and campaign-finance reform. The House GOP plans to hold hearings on affirmative

Mr. Kudlow is NR*'s economics editor.*

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action, and Dole and Gingrich recently appointed Jack Kemp to chair a commission on tax reform.

For social conservatives, the biggest disappointment in the first hundred days was the House's failure to sustain the Istook amendment to the $17-billion rescission package. The amendment would have devolved to the states the decision to permit or prohibit federal funding of abortions within their borders. The GOP leadership intends to attach a new Istook amendment to the Labor/HHS/Education appropriations bill, making it difficult to veto. Preparations are also under way for a "religious freedom" constitutional amendment that includes school prayer.

The fusion of social conservatives and economic-growth conservatives virtually guarantees political realignment for decades to come. Organized around the twin principles of religion-based moral values and economic growth, the Gingrich Contract and the first hundred days have been a huge success. In response, the Democrats have no agenda and no ideas. Back in the Thirties, all Republicans could do is vilify Franklin Roosevelt. Today, all the Democrats can do was vilify Newt Gingrich. It didn't work then, and it won't work now. □

The Lights Go Out in Georgia

OLIVER ROOKE

TBLISI

ON March 6 Gedevan Gelbakhiani, a professor of medicine, and Irakli Dokvadse, an engineer, were sentenced to death by a Georgian court. Although they had retracted their initial "confessions," which even the authorities admit were extracted under torture, they were found guilty of planting a bomb in Tblisi. Their trial has exposed as a sham Eduard Shevardnadze's commitment to the rule of law.

The treatment of Gelbakhiani and Dokvadse is the tip of the iceberg regarding human-rights abuses in Georgia. In the same case another 17 men were found guilty on lesser charges. They are all "Zviadists," supporters of the late Zviad Gamsakhurdia, the first democratically elected leader of Georgia, who was in power for 18 months before Shevardnadze's supporters ousted him in 1992.

The authorities have tried to justify the crackdown on Zviadists as a response to organized crime. Like the rest of the old Soviet Union, Georgia has a huge problem in this area, hints of which were evident at Frankfurt airport on the way to Tblisi. A tall young man in dark glasses and cashmere coat un-self-consciously handed over three large knives to airport officials. No one in the line batted an eyelid.

Dr. Rooke, a Birmingham psychiatrist, visited Georgia on behalf of the British Helsinki Human Rights Group.

On the plane, the Georgian businessman sitting next to me described some of the problems caused by the criminal gangs. He claimed that anyone who was thinking of setting up a business would first have to buy protection; otherwise his family would be kidnapped. He himself had obtained protection from both the local criminals and the remnants of the KGB. He also claimed that the electricity shortages (we enjoyed about four hours of current per day) were caused by gangs stealing copper and electrical equipment from the power stations. He explained that Shevardnadze had appointed Jaba Ioseliani, the well-known leader of a feared paramilitary gang, the Mkhedrioni (Horsemen), to the post of deputy chairman, the second most powerful position in the country, and gave him the job of cleansing the country of organized crime. Shevardnadze was either unaware or unconcerned that Ioseliani had served time in prison.

I visited the prison in the center of Tblisi. Outside it a group of weather-beaten old women dressed in rags were standing on a hillock. They were all shouting messages to their incarcerated loved ones. In a country so desperate for foreign aid, any foreigner is treated like royalty. I was therefore, after some confusion and many an incredulous look, allowed inside the prison hospital.

Two Zviadists awaiting sentencing, Zaza Tsiklauri and Nemo Chanturia, described their mistreatment in a chillingly matter-of-fact way. They were idealists who had had high hopes for democracy. The burn scars and mis-set bones they showed me were of secondary importance to them, but they made me promise to tell the world what was really going on in Georgia. They told me that the beatings started in the police station and continued in the prison. Tsiklauri needed hospital treatment halfway through the proceedings to keep him alive. The authorities kept their hands clean by employing another prisoner, a lifer known as Chokovadse, to do most of the torturing. He was rewarded with extra food and prostitutes. Tsiklauri and Chanturia claimed 90 per cent of all prisoners had been tortured.

Gedevan Gelbhakiani's lawyer told me he had asked the prison governor why Chokovadse had the keys to all the prisoners' cells. He was told that because of staff shortages, prisoners had to be hired to guard each other. When asked how many genuine guards he had at his disposal, the prison governor replied, "Five hundred, but many have the flu."

I INTERVIEWED Irakli Batiashvilli, who was made chairman of the informational intelligence bureau of Georgia (formerly the KGB) as a reward for helping to organize the violent coup that brought Shevardnadze to power. (He has since resigned.) He recalled visiting Zaza Tsiklauri in prison. I don't think Batiashvilli was cut out for his job: his eyes became moist when he described what he had seen. "It was not human," he said. "He could not speak. It was just the body with broken bones and burned places. If I was a little later, I do not think he would have been alive." Batiashvilli was so shocked by the viciousness of the torture that he appeared on TV to denounce it. His outburst initiated a brief inquiry; the intelligence service, the prosecutor's office, and the Ministry of Internal Affairs blamed one another. (The prisoners say members of each organization took part.) The prisoner Chokovadse was made the scapegoat; another year was added to his sentence.

My interview with the prosecutors was held in one of the huge, grey, soulless blocks of concrete beloved of Soviet officialdom. I passed an old woman gently weeping near a guarded door. The prosecutors were obviously not

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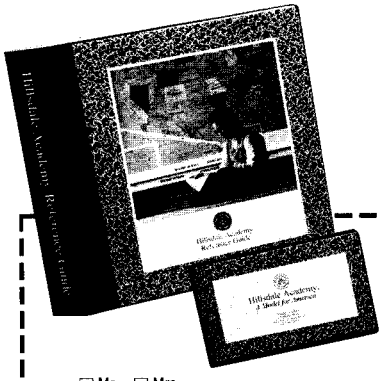

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used to dealing with busybodies. Then again, I am not used to being behind sound-proofed doors with four men at least one of whom is suspected of being a torturer. (He has been accused by one of the defendants, Dokvadze, of supervising his mistreatment.) It made for a stilted interview. Nevertheless, the prosecutors did agree that there had been some irregularities in the courtroom, such as testimony without the defendants or their lawyers present. They felt that these were minor deviations and wholly justified by the defendants' rudeness. (The defendants had protested their treatment by turning their backs on the judge and singing songs.) My request that they be given a retrial was not greeted with enthusiasm.

If the appeal for a retrial (supported by various human-rights organizations, including Amnesty International) is ignored, the defendants can appeal to Mr. Shevardnadze himself to pardon them. A failure to do so ought to cast doubt upon his reassurances to the West. □

Word of Mouth

RICH LOWRY

WASHINGTON, D.C.

ALAN KEYES is on the campaign trail. Today he's hitting Denver, then Indianapolis—both from the back seat of his hired Lincoln Town Car parked outside the Washington studios of National Empowerment Television. Keyes does the two talk shows from a portable phone; strewn beside him on the seat are a copy of Montaigne's complete works (in French), a book of blessings and devotions by Pope John Paul, and the Bible. The Harvard-educated Keyes has a radio talk show of his own out of Baltimore. He is America's first talk-radio presidential candidate, running a talk-radio campaign, doing what he does best: talk.

"You can engage in a high level of discussion," he says. "People not only tolerate it, they seem to be hungry for it. On my show we've talked about the Constitution, we've talked about Locke's *Second Treatise*, we've talked about all kinds of stuff. I think the normal look-down-your-nose-at-'em pundits and politicians would think, 'Oh no, the American people can't talk about that; they're too stupid.' No. Truth is, I think that a lot of the politicians and pundits are too stupid to deal with these issues."

Keyes, who calls himself a "moral populist" and has certainly earned the latter half of the label, is enjoying something of a presidential boomlet—as much of a boomlet, anyway, as can attend a candidate with no money, no appreciable organization, no experience as an elected official, and no prospects. The grass-roots ferment over the Republican Party's first black presidential candidate stems, appropriately enough, from a speech. At a New Hampshire candidates forum in February, Keyes delivered a high-decibel jeremiad about the nation's moral crisis and the need for the GOP to remain rigorously pro-life.

Roman Genn

The New Hampshire state party immediately started getting calls: Who *is* this guy Keyes? When Focus on the Family's James Dobson played parts of Keyes's speech on his own radio show—carried by about 1,500 stations—the response was so overwhelming that Dobson played it again the next day. "We got literally thousands and thousands of calls," says Focus on the Family's Paul Hetrick. Dobson told listeners he wept when he first heard Keyes's speech.

In a now infamous meeting with Dobson and the Family Research Council's Gary Bauer, Senator Phil Gramm reportedly rebuffed their pleas to give social issues more salience in his campaign, insisting he's a presidential candidate, not a preacher. Alan Keyes wouldn't be so quick to make the distinction. He stands at the crossroads where bombast meets conservative principle, a lone wolf who relishes the prospect of crying in the wilderness. Like his favorite medium, Keyes is unmodulated and raw but nonetheless carries a message the GOP had best not ignore.

KEYES grew up an Army brat, attended high school in Texas, and was elected president of Boys Nation. He spent two years at Cornell and then—after campus militants threatened his life—moved on with his mentor Allan Bloom to Harvard, where he earned a PhD in political science. Keyes had been in the Foreign Service for about five years when Jeane Kirkpatrick asked him to serve in her UN mission. He thrived in a diplomatic job that didn't always require diplomacy. "At the UN a great deal of the business is flat-out debate," says Charles Lichenstein, a colleague at the mission. "For that kind of purpose Alan was absolutely superb, because there's no one who's more articulate." Keyes eventually moved to the Reagan State Department, where he fought sanctions against South Africa. After that, he made two runs for the U.S. Senate in Maryland, the first a commendable effort against long odds, the second an unmitigated disaster.

Keyes turned out to be something of a political *idiot-savant*. His unmatched skill in impassioned oratory is accompanied by a deficit in more mundane political abilities, such as listening, glad-handing, and gauging his effect on those around him. One staffer on his second, 1992 campaign recalls an encounter with a pro-choice woman at Loyola College: "He sat there and argued with this lady for half an hour. And then the lady finally walked away. Then Alan followed her, still yelling at the woman. You don't win voters that way."

Keyes jumped from the 1992 meltdown to 1994 presidential campaign on the strength of his oratory. Last year he made a series of speeches on behalf of John Knox, a candidate in Georgia's

Mr. Lowry is NR*'s national political reporter.*

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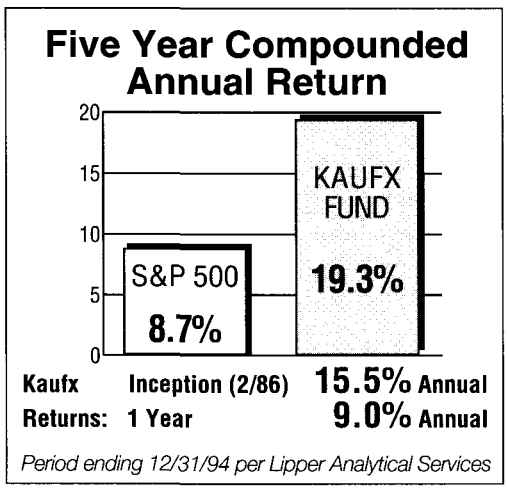

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Republican gubernatorial primary. Knox lost, but his backers—staunchly pro-life—were so taken with Keyes that they urged him to run for President. They financed an Atlanta headquarters where five new people recently had to be hired and the phone system upgraded to handle the deluge of incoming calls.

Keyes does have the most profound message of any GOP candidate. He focuses on abortion not just because it is wrong but because it exemplifies a basic philosophical error. Americans, Keyes says, misunderstand freedom as the license to do whatever you like, rather than the delicate product of "public and personal moral discipline." For Keyes, his position on abortion and everything else stems from a proper understanding of the Declaration of Independence. "People can stand with me and for the Declaration," he avers, "or they can stand against me and declare that they are willing to throw it down the toilet of history."

Few politicians have the wits to invoke the Declaration in more than a perfunctory way; fewer still have the chutzpah to claim it all for themselves. If Keyes owes some of his intellectual subtlety to Allan Bloom, the embodiment of nuance and refinement, his rhetorical style is all talk radio, where immoderation is a prized virtue. So in an announcement speech that includes some careful moral argument, Keyes also warns about the "unelected foreigners in the World Trade Organization" and thunders, "Somebody has got to stand up and speak for us! Somebody has got to stand up and fight for us!"

His message is resonating with GOP activists partly because, so far, no other major Republican candidate has been willing to pick up the banner. Gary Bauer recounts a session Phil Gramm recently had with about 350 party activists in Washington. Gramm gave his standard stump speech. Then a couple asked if Gramm knew that a campaign letter outlining his agenda didn't mention any of the social issues. "If I were Phil Gramm," Bauer says, "I would have just said 'No, and I'll go back and do something.' Instead he used that as the occasion to say, 'Well, those aren't the issues I'm going to emphasize.' And after that the next ten questions were on these issues. And by the time he left he didn't have a vote in the room."

Keyes would have had them all on their feet. He likes to say, "You never win an argument you don't make." But the virtue argument, the one Bill Bennett might have been able to carry forward with such grace, can't be made solely on the political fringes. The sooner it falls into gentler hands, the better—for the party and the nation. As consolation, somewhere on the AM band a prime piece of drive time surely awaits Alan Keyes. □

Little Red Book for Sale

RADEK SIKORSKI

PEKING

"ALL reactionaries are paper tigers," I read in the small brochure an elderly woman surreptitiously handed to me at a bazaar behind Peking's International Club, about a mile from Tiananmen Square. "We should rid our ranks of all impotent thinking. All views that overestimate the strength of the enemy and underestimate the strength of the people are wrong." These were, of course, the pearls of wisdom of Chairman Mao Tse-tung; the brochure was his infamous *Little Red Book*, which used to induce millions into intellectual levitation. Now, it was for sale.

"How much?" I asked the woman, portly and in worn clothes.

"Eighty yuan," she said—ten dollars.

"Eighty yuan, for this nonsense?" I exclaimed. "You must be joking. I'll give you twenty."

"Sixty."

"Twenty-five."

We settled at forty yuan—five dollars. It was, after all, the original 1966 English edition in immaculate condition. I could have had a much thumbed copy in Chinese for less than half that. I shook my new acquisition in the air in the manner that the hysterical crowds used to do. People in a little cluster that had gathered to witness our haggling instinctively looked around, but then laughed together with me. My guardian angel from the Foreign Ministry later told me that I could have had a copy from him for a few cents.

People may laugh at the *Little Red Book*, but less than a mile away a portrait of its author still hangs from the Gate of Heavenly Peace. Post-Tiananmen China is a schizophrenic country. The ideology is dead—top government leaders have said they would rather the Mao mausoleum had never been built—and yet they cannot let go of it; they are still mumbling incoherently about "socialism with Chinese characteristics." How, then, should we categorize China? Is it a totalitarian country, whose every failure we should applaud? Or does China pose a new kind of authoritarian threat?

Soon after I arrived in Peking I concluded that present-day China could not be described as totalitarian. By definition, a totalitarian society is atomized, perfectly brainwashed, and incapable of so much as thinking outside the boundaries set by the powers that be. In the strict sense, China was already not totalitarian in June 1989, when the army crushed the students' rebellion. The fact that the authorities had to use violence meant that the straightjacket of totalitarian control had already loosened up. Today, the loosening has gone much further.

One of the defining characteristics of a totalitarian society is that the regime controls access to information. In this respect, the authorities seemed to want to do things by the totalitarian book when they recently banned satellite dishes. In theory dishes may now only be owned by those with proper authorization—presumably only trusted comrades who would not be contaminated by bourgeois ideas emanating from MTV. But dozens of satellite dishes can still be seen on apartment houses all over Peking. It's hard to believe that so many people need to be exposed to Western temptations in the course of their duties. In fact, local authorities have sabotaged the ban because it would harm the cable networks, in which they have commercial stakes. Chinese students are still restricted in their use of fax machines, but soon Chinese universities will be connected to the Internet. It's hard to imagine how censorship or even eavesdropping might work, given the volume of data that is likely to circulate.

Mr. Sikorski is NR*'s roving correspondent.*

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A totalitarian regime also has to control most of the economy. If the state is the main employer, landlord, and food distributor, then rebellion against those in power risks not just imprisonment but starvation. Today China fails this criterion. The economy in most provinces is largely private. As a result, the state has lost a potent lever of economic control over its citizens, leading, for example, to a reduction in daughter killing—the habit of killing girls, in order to have sons while staying within draconian laws that punish the rearing of more than one or two children. Reportedly, many of the girls who disappear shortly after birth do not get dumped in the river but are brought up by their parents in secrecy, in a sort of population grey economy. This would have been unthinkable even twenty years ago—where would the parents have got ration cards to feed the extra mouth?

The current spirit of China reveals itself in a little compound in the old part of Peking, where I was taken by Zdzislaw Goralczyk, the Polish ambassador. An entrance gate with red pillars and a traditional roof leads to several courtyards formed by low wooden outbuildings connected by shaded arcades. The flora is now neglected, but a pagoda stands on top of a stone garden. A small door in its base leads to a nuclear shelter several stories deep. This was once the home of K'ang Sheng, Mao's Beria, the man who made it possible for the tyrant to carry out such bold schemes as the Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution. Today, you can sleep in his bed for a few hundred dollars, and the ambassador, who was a student in Peking when the ogre was still rampant, treated me to a delicious supper in a restaurant in one of the outbuildings.

Business has triumphed over ideology in less symbolic ways as well. The Beijing Shirt Factory, on the capital's outskirts, is still state owned but prospers thanks to foreign contracts. If you've bought a Ralph Lauren shirt recently and wondered why it no longer has a "Made in the USA" label, it probably comes from here. Hundreds of diligent women sit at machines sowing cuffs and collars, fastening buttons, and packing the assembled product into plastic slipcases. I asked one of the managers if the women get rotated in their work, sometimes working at collars, say, and other times at cuffs. "Oh, no," he said. "In China we believe that you have to be master at one thing." To look even for a quarter of an hour at the women repeating the same mechanical tasks over and over again is enough to make you think that Marx had a point when he talked about the alienation of the worker from the product of his work. The factory receives the cotton from Ralph Lauren and makes it into the final product for $2 per shirt. Similarly, the Jeep assembly plant, which puts together the real McCoy here from original parts, offers brand new cars—priced for $20,000, in the United States—for $7,000. As they say in England, it's the profit that makes it dear.

CHINA'S conversion to capitalism in all but name has not happened by some lucky coincidence, while the authorities' minds were on something else. It has been a gradual, carefully planned process over the last 15 years, and it is set to continue. I met Haijun Wang, a director at the State Commission for Reform, the body that once spearheaded such heresies of socialism as free peasant markets and now advises on ways to reform the country's banking system, taxation system, and equity markets. Mr. Wang, young, Oxford educated, eloquent in a scholarly way, has traveled both to the West and to Central Europe; he argued with me the pros and cons of the Czech versus the Thatcherite privatization schemes. "When we like the look of an idea, we first try it in one province," he said, "say on 80 or 90 million people." Mr. Wang had no counterparts in the Soviet Union: there was no one who really understood what was wrong with the economy, no one who understood what would make it right again. If the Soviet leadership had allowed people like Mr. Wang to carry out half the reforms that are now taken for granted in China, they would still be in charge.

Of course, none of the capitalist progress described above means China is a nice place. "Re-education"—sending townspeople into the countryside to break their spirit—is still practiced. There are thousands of political prisoners. Tibet's national aspirations are ruthlessly suppressed. The so-called "opposition parties," with which the Communist Party engages in "consultation," are largely a sham. Real power remains in the hands of an unelected, corrupt clique of the *nomenklatura*. We used to have a phrase in Central Europe for socialism in its years of decline: "totalitarianism with knocked-out teeth." Given how corrupt China's leadership is, by all accounts, perhaps its teeth are not so much knocked out as rotten.

Yet with the exception of Tibet, China, true to most of its history, remains uninterested in imposing its brand of authoritarianism on the rest of the world. China does not represent the threat that will replace the Soviet Union in NATO's pantheon of enemies: its unpleasantness is mostly directed at its own people. Where we cannot fight for a democratic China, we must fight for a more open China. More trade, more Western contacts, more Western television, more Western information and Western broadcasting—that is what will make China open, not constant threats of boycotts.

Perhaps we should bet on evolution rather than revolution in Peking. After all, it is not as if Russia, with all the commotion since the accession to power of Mikhail Gorbachev ten years ago, is now run by Jeffersonian democrats. It is run by high Soviet apparatchiks, whether they now call themselves democrats, nationalists, or neo-Communists. They are as corrupt, and in the new Russia's colonial wars have proved themselves to be as brutal, as they were in their former incarnation. I have no doubt that China's Red Princes, the children of the *nomenklatura* who will no doubt be running the country next, are just as appalling. Unlike in Central Europe, civil society has in both China and Russia been too weak to sustain genuine democrats.

If Communists are likely to stay in charge whatever route a country takes away from totalitarianism, perhaps it is better that the change happen in an orderly fashion, foster economic prosperity rather than collapse. That way capitalism will have its chance to work its miracle, a middle class will have the time to form, and whole areas of public activity will be freed from the Party's dead hand. China's evolutionary road away from Communism may prove to be less painful and faster than Russia's. I wouldn't be surprised if China enters the next century prosperous and heading for democracy, while Russia continues to wallow in extremism, civil strife, and poverty. □

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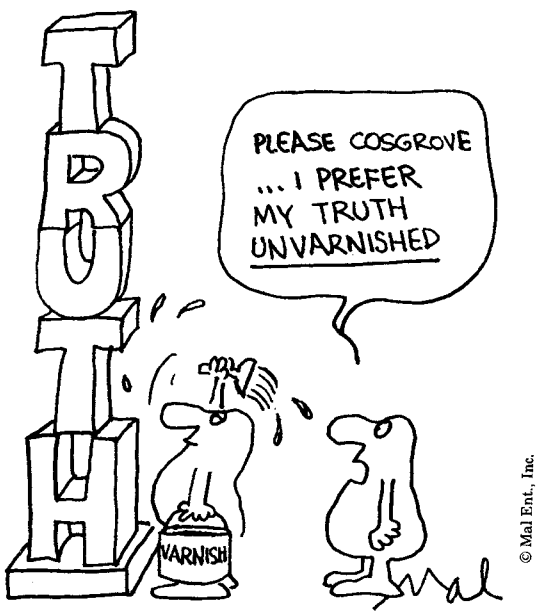

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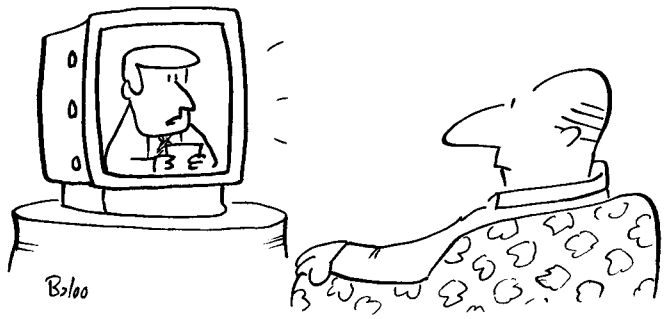

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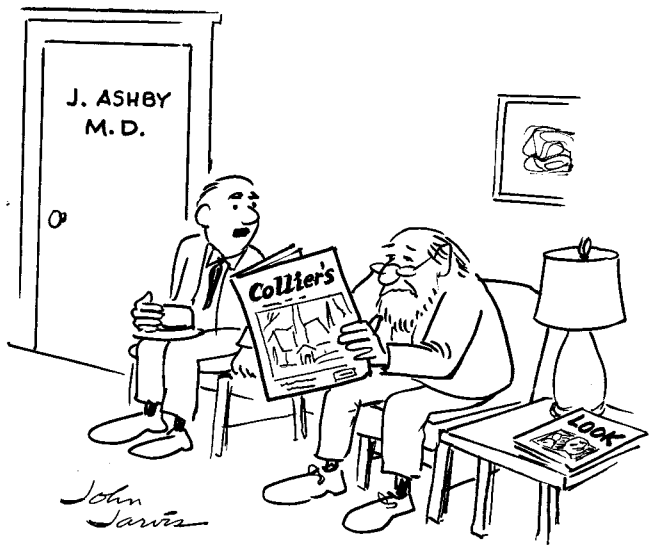

"Been waiting long?"

"I'm a single mother by choice. I want my son to grow up fully aware of the fact that men are superfluous."

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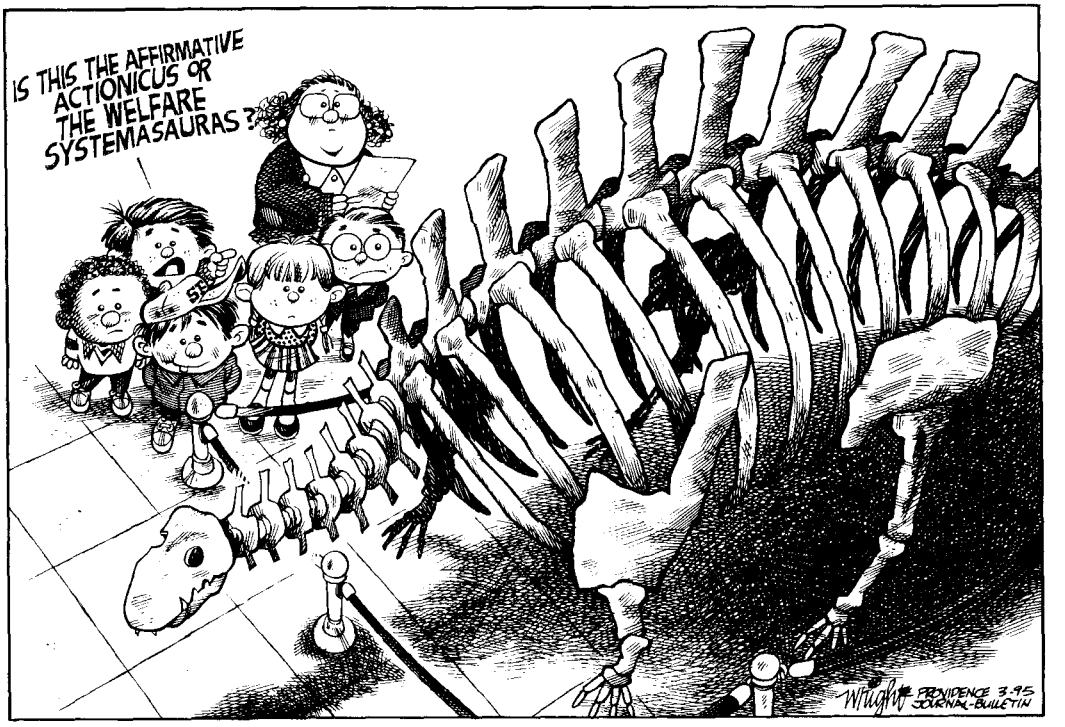

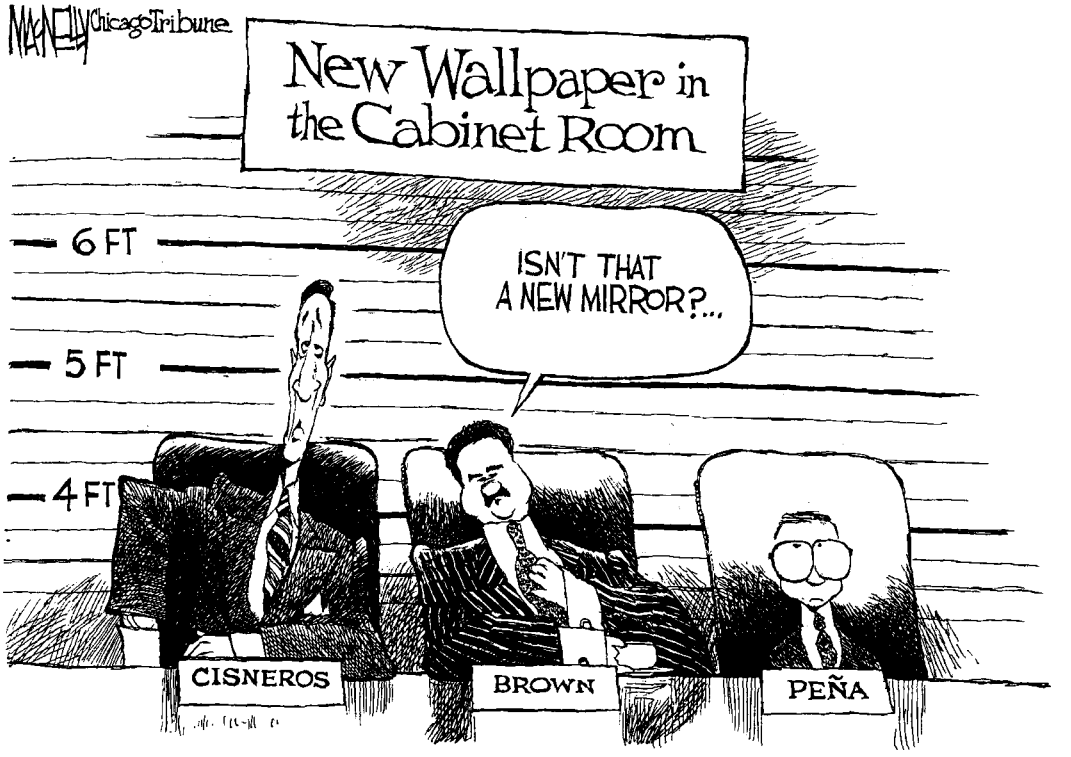

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Flaws in the 'New Paradigm'

POINTS OF ORDER

Liberal internationalism in the Carter/Clinton mold has produced an isolationist backlash that conservative internationalists must now tame. Here's how.

PETER W. RODMAN

FOREIGN-POLICY experts take it for granted that, with the Cold War over, we live in an era of unprecedented novelty.

In the November *Foreign Affairs*, Leslie H. Gelb wrote eloquently about the proliferation of "teacup wars" (Bosnia, Somalia, Rwanda, Haiti): "wars of national debilitation, a steady run of uncivil civil wars sundering fragile but functioning nation-states and gnawing at the well-being of stable nations." For Gelb, these are more important than the classical problem of relations among the major powers, which are basically in good shape.

A scholar reviewing my new book in the *New York Times Book Review* argued that traditional analyses of power politics did not do justice to "transformations under way in communications, demographics, economics, technology, values, and, perhaps most important, individual identities." The lives of most Americans, he wrote, are less likely to be affected by issues of power than by "developments in trade, immigration, or international health policy."

Still others, influenced by Robert D. Kaplan or Sir James Goldsmith, see a world spinning out of control amid technological change, impoverishment of the middle classes, overpopulation, environmental degradation, global organized crime, tribalism, disease, and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

Meanwhile, a whole new academic field has arisen around the topic of "humanitarian intervention," uniting scholars, international lawyers, and think-tank experts in the conviction that intervention in "humanitarian emergencies" will be a preoccupation—indeed, a duty—of the international community in the new period.

All the changes described here are real, and some are profound. They weaken traditional structures and require a new sophistication in statesmanship. One cannot understand what is going on in the world without understanding the new economic, cultural, social, and technological forces at work. Yet the idea that these concerns have *replaced* classical questions of security as the core issues on the international agenda is triumphantly proclaimed more often than it is analyzed.

I offer a few heretical thoughts:

1. The U.S. Government doesn't have a clue how to resolve most of the world's ethnic conflicts, and never will. The expertise, leverage, and political will simply don't exist, no matter how many study groups on Nagorno-Karabakh the Council on Foreign Relations convenes.

2. If relations among the major powers go sour, the world's ability to collaborate on any of the more ambitious challenges will evaporate instantly. If we take for granted today's relatively benign relations among the big powers, we will lose them.

3. It is obvious that economic trends are fundamental. But if trade disputes among the major economic powers are not contained and resolved in accordance with an overriding sense of common *strategic* interest, they will indeed unravel the international order.

4. The "new age" vocation of the Clinton Administration has already produced an isolationist backlash among the American people. A series of clumsy humanitarian interventions in Somalia, Bosnia, Rwanda, and Haiti has come close to discrediting all intervention; a naïve multilateralism has come close to discrediting U.S. involvement in international institutions. It is now a commonplace of our political debate that the American people will not risk major sacrifice without a showing that our national interest is at stake. This problem of latent isolationism will not be solved by a more eager embrace of the "new paradigm" in foreign policy; indeed, it was caused in part by the flight from the national interest that the "new paradigm" represents.

Mr. Rodman, an NR *senior editor, is director of National Security Programs at the new Nixon Center for Peace and Freedom and the author of* More Precious than Peace: The Cold War and the Struggle for the Third World *(Scribner's).*

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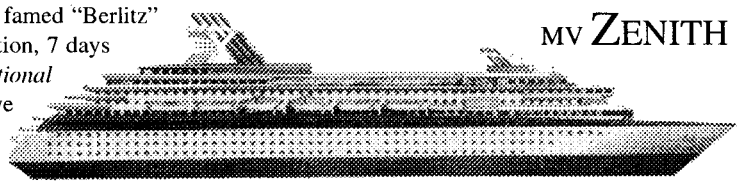

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Whoever is to blame for the phenomenon, however, the new popular allergy to foreign involvement has become an agonizing problem for Republicans, particularly conservative Republicans. The Contract with America tapped into some of its themes—rejecting, for example, the subordination of U.S. troops to UN command. But the siren song of isolationism is dangerous for the country. On foreign aid or military action or even UN peacekeeping, the necessary critique of Clintonism must not slide over into a reflexive assault on instruments of U.S. policy that a future President would want to have available. Conservative internationalists have inherited the thankless task of rescuing our foreign policy from the damage the liberal internationalists have wrought, and of restoring some balance and common sense to the national debate.

What the American people need from their leaders now is both a reassurance and a reminder—a reassurance that not every international problem requires an American solution (indeed, that much of the world's disorder *cannot* be "solved"), along with a reminder that certain problems *do* require American leadership. The people need reassurance, too, that their leaders understand what is important to the U.S. and what is not.

It's time to go back to basics. We have many lofty goals in the world, but security is the precondition for achieving any of them. Conflicts abound, posing dilemmas for our defense policy and diplomacy; relations

The Need for NATO

IRVING Kristol recently found himself rendered "mute." It happened at a dinner with a number of influential policy-makers who were discussing the future of NATO and its eastward expansion. The notion that there was any future for NATO, let alone an expanded NATO, was one after-dinner debate too far. Mr. Kristol summed up his incredulity by writing in the *Wall Street Journal* that he was "stunned by the irrelevance" of the topic. His column began with an aphorism ascribed to Churchill, that "memory was the enemy of policy," and ended with the flat statement that NATO should politely slide into obsolescence. For him, it was time to turn to the problems of Mexico, Islamic fundamentalism, and China. Europe was last decade's hemline.

As it happens, I was at the same dinner. As I listened to a number of Cold Warriors explain why it was time to pack up NATO and leave Europe to wallow in its own inadequacies, I wondered if we were seeing some shrewd repositioning here. Noticing that isolationism had strong appeal again in America, had our neoconservative intellectuals decided it was too important a policy position to be left to the populists? Or was it simply a case of the "restless intellectual" syndrome, the feeling that now that America was not being menaced in the gut by the Evil Empire, all the remaining loose ends in Europe were simply housekeeping, and this was the time to go down to Gramercy Park and discuss welfare mothers or the newest Islamic lunatic? This suspicion was reinforced as I re-read Mr. Kristol's explanation of his anti-NATO position.

According to Kristol, NATO was created "to protect Western Europe from Soviet aggression and also to protect it from the possibility of a resurgent German nationalism. "Such protection," he wrote, "is no longer necessary. . . . The Cold War is over, and with it a phase of world history—the European phase." The difficulty with this is that NATO was created as a military and political institution to give expression to common Western democratic interests and guard them against whatever threat might arise. At the time of NATO's establishment the threat was indeed Soviet aggression and, to a lesser extent, a fear of German resurgence. But these two threats were only the specific demonstration of the need for the transatlantic alliance, not the alliance's raison d'être. To dismiss NATO because the USSR is deceased is like concluding that the sheriff hired to stop postal-coach robbers is no longer needed because the threat is now from con artists.

Circumstances clearly have changed since 1948, but there are still important objectives to be achieved in completing the satisfactory outcome of the Cold War. The frontiers of Western liberal democracy need to be secured as far east as possible, and to that end we have moral as well as strategic imperatives. Prior to their shabby behavior in 1938, the Allies created Poland and Czechoslovakia in 1919. The Americans and the British secured guarantees of free elections for Poland in 1945. Ever since we created these states, we have intermittently offered them security guarantees that we can now, finally, give them at virtually no cost.

There is no precedent for a war-free Europe without the promise of American involvement in the event of an emergency. NATO has been the most successful military alliance in history, achieving victory over the Soviet Union without having to go to war for it. The transition from a containment role to a stabilization role is already under way, and NATO has the potential to defend Western interests in southeastern Europe, the Middle East, and North Africa. The NATO theater can be redefined, a process already subtly begun by Germany's decision to allow deployment of its forces beyond NATO's frontiers in certain multilateral circumstances. Germany itself has always been ambivalent about whether it belonged to the East or the West, and the U.S. presence in NATO both cements Germany's Western identity and counterbalances its economic domination.

Indeed, if only NATO had existed earlier, two world wars and the Cold War itself might have been avoided or been considerably shorter. That is what one can learn from history, and that is why Kristol's opening aphorism is wrong. To say that

Miss Amiel is a former senior political columnist for the London Sunday Times.

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among the major powers suddenly seem more precarious. These issues go to the heart of the international *structure*, a structure that is being transformed following the Soviet collapse. It is on this structural problem that the United States should focus.

The main elements of the international system are in flux. In what used to be called "East–West relations," we see the rapid and disconcerting re-emergence of a nationalist Russia. There is also a profound change in what used to be called "West–West" relations, namely relations among the industrial democracies. In the Third World, there are a few problems that rise to the level of strategic threats to us. A national strategy that can deal satisfactorily with these central challenges will go a long way toward ensuring against catastrophes, even if it cannot solve every problem.

First, Russia. Bismarck supposedly remarked that Russia is never as strong, or as weak, as it appears. We now see a Russia that is getting back on its feet geopolitically without waiting to get back on its feet economically. At least within the confines of the former USSR, it is reasserting its regional dominance. Even before Chechnya, Moscow had resorted to coercion in several neighboring states and was seeking international blessing for such a hegemonic role.

Summits with Mr. Yeltsin are no longer sentimental occasions in which we ooze solicitude about how to lift up an economically prostrate Russia. The U.S.–Russia

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memory is the enemy of policy elegantly turns Santayana on his head and is, I suppose, like saying that generals always fight the last war. But you can't conclude from that witticism that the right general to lead the current war is one who has never been a soldier.

WHAT has sent so formidable an intellectual as Kristol from his usual a-hysterical stance to one that is a-historical? His contribution to rigorous political analysis can scarcely be overestimated. Early on, at *Encounter* magazine, he fought with tremendous distinction and effect to prevent the Left from taking over Western intellectual life. He was a precursor of the neoconservative movement, which has played a vital role in moving political opinion away from naïve liberalism. His assertion, made in the *Journal* article, that no foreseeable activity of the Germans, Russians, French, British, Italians, Turks, or other European nationalities could ever seriously affect the U.S. is so overstated it destroys whatever defensible case he might have had.

Kristol's indifference to Europe now that Communism has been defeated has echoes of a God Bless Americocentrism holding that anywhere beyond these sunny shores lies under nasty storm clouds. Defeating a bad ideology mattered, but helping its survivors matters less. Henry Kissinger would see this attitude as confirming his gloomy view that American foreign policy exists only in response to some great threat whose defeat allows everyone to go back to Minnesota and worry about grain prices. Certainly the notion that the U.S. has continuing legitimate national interests in strategic areas abroad that should not be abandoned after each successfully resolved crisis plays no part in this approach. But then, perhaps the role of intellectuals is to play the pollinating bee, flitting from idea to idea. The governance of serious world powers, on the other hand, requires more consistency.

The roots of America's indifference to Europe may go back as far as the War of Independence. One cannot disregard the fundamental fact that America came into being as a rejection of Europe. The first European settlers were escaping Europe and its values. After independence, successive waves of American immigrants came to escape the oppression of, especially, Eastern Europe's socio-economic structures. Out of this rejectionism, they built the extraordinary success of America, a country that in a number of ways far exceeds Europe. Many Americans today, including some neoconservatives, are only a generation or two away from Central and Eastern Europe, and their indifference to the fate of Eastern Europe may be related in part to historical memory.

The citizens of Czechoslovakia, Hungary, and Poland, on the other hand, have long had an unrequited love affair with the West. When Mr. Kristol and his allies in the West won the Cold War, the Visograd countries thought their moment had come. The liberal democracies, they believed, might finally extend both their sphere of influence and their security zone just a little further in Europe.

What the West has given them instead is President Clinton's Partnership for Peace, which is rather like offering friendship when they wanted marriage. When a love affair is unrequited, it may turn to hate or look for other relationships on the rebound. After all that the American taxpayer has done to secure the freedom of these countries, leaving Central and Eastern Europe in the lurch borders on criminal negligence. If the Russian democratic flower is too weak to withstand independent foreign policies by sovereign neighbors, then it is likely no flower but rather a noxious weed that will require a strong NATO to contain it.

As for the famous American indifference to shedding blood for obscure places with names like Mereczowszczyno, we should remember a couple of things. First, great alliances diminish rather than enhance the likelihood of having to shed blood. Second, it was in the village of Mereczowszczyno that Washington's great brigadier general Tadeusz Kosciuszko was born. His statue stands a stone's throw from the White House, a reminder that Americans simply need leadership to rally them to causes that, like the Civil War, Lend Lease, or NATO itself, may begin as unpopular but when explained are seen as in the national interest. —BARBARA AMIEL

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relationship has taken on a geopolitical cast, with the most recent high-level meetings clouded by contentious issues such as Chechnya, Bosnia, and Russia's eager consorting with countries (chiefly Iraq and Iran) that threaten vital U.S. interests in the Middle East.

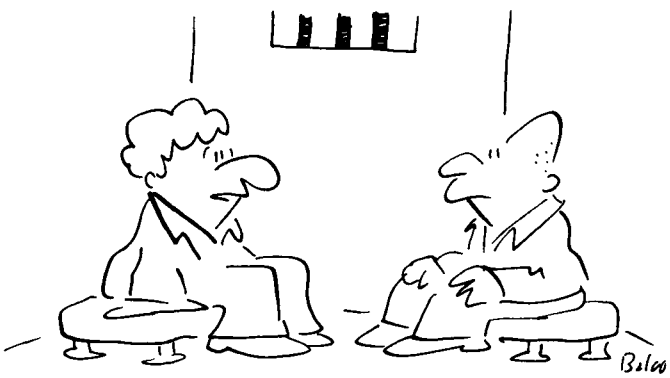
Tottering Balance of Power

THE re-emergence of Russia shows the permanent necessity of maintaining the balance of power in Europe. Russia is a disproportionate factor of power on the Continent, and has been a clumsy and erratic player in European politics for centuries. There is no counterweight to Russia except the American presence in Europe. This means an American *military* presence. The fashionable view that security concerns are obsolete, or have been replaced by economic and social concerns, is wildly premature. Ask the Central Europeans, who have just awakened from a sixty-year nightmare, are still situated between Russia and Germany, and are not persuaded that saving the ozone layer is their major national-security problem. They know in their bones that national survival is not automatic. Therefore, eager as they are to join the European Union for their economic future, they are just as eager to join NATO for their security.

NATO ensures the American presence in Europe, and that is the great equalizer. The new democracies of Central and Eastern Europe (including the Baltic states) see our presence as the best guarantee of their independence, and our withdrawal as their greatest danger. This century teaches that the vulnerability of these states is a principal vulnerability of European stability and that a major upheaval in Europe makes the world (including our part of it) less secure.

The Administration's European policy, alas, seems to have missed the geopolitical point. For a long time, the President neglected Europe altogether. He reduced U.S. troops to 100,000, one-third less than the 150,000 that President Bush, Defense Secretary Cheney, and General Powell had thought wise. The reluctance to embrace the new democracies in the Atlantic Alliance relegates them to a no-man's-land between Western Europe and Russia, leaving a dangerous ambiguity about this pivotal region.

The new democracies see themselves as part of the West, politically, culturally, and morally. And so we should see them. The balance of power can remain benign—as it is now, with substantial military disengagement on both sides—but only if Russia accepts the new status quo of Central and Eastern European independence. The failure of NATO and the EU to embrace these countries quickly (as we did Spain and Portugal in the 1970s) not only tempts revisionist ambitions in Russia but also leads to the demoralization, already evident, of democratic forces in the region.



"It's all very confusing—they got me for selling military secrets to the Armed Services Committee."

The second major change is in relations among the industrial democracies. Here the most serious long-term geopolitical issue is the rising power of Germany and Japan. These countries are currently absorbed in themselves, but this is temporary. They are dynamic nations, with a reassertive nationalism just below the surface. Their international aspirations are bound to grow. Already they are throwing off legal inhibitions about sending military forces overseas. Germany has been more assertive over Yugoslavia and other issues. Japan has flirted with the idea of an East Asian economic grouping that would exclude the United States.

Throughout history, economic power has sooner or later translated into military power. Germany and Japan since the 1950s have been rare exceptions. German military power is firmly embedded in NATO's integrated command. The U.S. Security Treaty with Japan marks out a division of labor in procurement and strategy, with the Japanese denying themselves an offensive military capability. It is the U.S. security link that anchors these two rising powers securely to the international system; that link is now in danger of breaking.

On all sides there is a weakening of the emotional commitment to alliances now that the Soviet threat has subsided. We see the U.S. troop cuts in Europe and pressure from Ross Perot and Pat Buchanan to pull out completely. Bosnia has divided the Atlantic allies. We see the chronic trade quarrels with both Europe and Japan, and the nationalist reaction that a bullying U.S. policy has been provoking, especially in Japan.

A weakening of the U.S. security link with Germany and Japan could be the most destabilizing development in the coming decade. An American withdrawal—or the perception of it—could lead to a new independent-mindedness on the part of these countries, creating massive insecurity on the part of all their neighbors. Thus, we have a powerful interest in maintaining our ties with Germany and Japan. This means maintaining U.S. troop levels, remaining a serious security factor in Western Europe and East Asia, and taming the economic disputes so that they don't tear apart the political relationships that have been so crucial to global stability.

The Far East poses a structural problem similar to that in Europe. China and Japan fear each other; both are substantial military powers, and China is building up rapidly. North and South Korea loathe each other. There is deep antagonism between South Korea and Japan, Japan and Russia, and Russia and China.

The economic success of the Pacific region (in which we have a huge stake) is much commented upon. Less

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commented upon is the degree to which this extraordinary recent prosperity is predicated upon a benign political and security environment that is being called into question today as never before since 1945.

Relations with China continue to be damaged by the human-rights issue. Ties with both Japan and China have been torn by trade quarrels. The recent agreement with North Korea does little to avert the nuclear danger. Over all, there is a perception that America is abdicating its strategic role. In the Far East, there is no regional grouping comparable to the European Union to do part of the job of bringing harmony; America's bilateral relationships with the various countries represent the full extent of the international security framework. Each of the parties sees us as insurance against the others. This is our advantage. It is also our responsibility: to prevent the wholesale destabilization of a region where, unlike in Europe, key countries are building up their military forces, not disarming.

Trouble Everywhere

AS FOR the Third World, the main danger is what Charles Krauthammer describes as the "radical weapon states"—North Korea, Iraq, Iran, et al.—pursuing weapons of mass destruction in the service of hostile ideologies. While not every Third World problem rises to the level of a strategic problem for the U.S., these do. In the age of ballistic missiles, the threat to our allies, our forces, and ultimately our territory cannot be ignored.

The Middle East remains a vital interest, and the tragedy is that just as the Arab–Israeli peace process seemed to be making unprecedented progress, the negative forces (Iran, Iraq, radical Islam) have begun to overtake it. The U.S. role in the Arab–Israeli diplomacy remains pivotal. As Desert Storm demonstrated, only the United States can organize and lead the international community's response to a major regional military threat. So here, too, the U.S. is the key, ensuring security for those striving to make peace.

But again, part of the problem is the Administration's lack of strategic seriousness. Militarily, we are stretched far too thin. U.S. military doctrine purports to be able to handle two major regional crises simultaneously; but the General Accounting Office disclosed last year that this strategy is underfunded by some $150 billion over the next five years. With U.S. forces committed to Haiti, Bosnia, Macedonia, Rwanda, the Persian Gulf, and the Korean peninsula, not to mention Western Europe, our vulnerability has been palpable.

The Republicans have been afraid to sound the alarm about this precipitous drop in our ability to meet our defense commitments. The brave words in the Contract with America about "revitalization" of our defense capability suggested this was ending, but the budget battles so far do not point to a decisive reversal of the trend.

It is true that America faces no overwhelming or immediate threat. The isolationist fallacy, however, is to assume that removing the pivotal factor in the benign international situation—the American contribution—will not topple the whole structure. It will.

Doing our job, moreover, will not be an exhausting burden on the United States. Even under the Bush–Cheney plan, which would have reduced military expenditures far less sharply than the Clinton Administration has, defense spending would have been down to only 3.9 per cent of GDP by 1997—the lowest since the 1930s. Foreign aid is an infinitesimal 0.2 per cent of our GDP and less than 1 per cent of the federal budget.

The problem is political and psychological, not financial. To recover the political will to engage in the world, the American public must recover its confidence in its leaders. This requires a sense of priorities. The "new age" issues are the electives: desirable, even important. The structural issues are the requirements. There is no possibility of a sensible international response to economic trends or protection of the environment or human rights or peacekeeping or anything else if relations among the major powers go sour or if Third World thugs are lobbing nuclear missiles around.

It is ironic how the pendulum has swung. Twenty years ago, Richard Nixon and Henry Kissinger sought (in vain) to ground American foreign policy in a new realism, weaning it away from a moralist tradition that, since Woodrow Wilson, had emphasized promoting democracy and humanitarianism. Where Nixon and Kissinger failed, Bill Clinton has (unintentionally) succeeded. With the end of the Cold War, the American taxpayer wanted a break anyway. Mr. Clinton chose this historical moment to embark on a series of misguided humanitarian interventions for which there was little public support. A multilateralism that he advertised as a way of sharing our burdens with others (through the UN) began to look like an assumption that legitimacy could be conferred on our foreign policy only by the blessing of others. When 15 Americans were killed over Iraq, Vice President Al Gore paid tribute to "those who died in the service of the United Nations."

The reaction was inevitable. "War powers" resolutions proliferated in Congress in 1993. The Contract with America pledged never again to put U.S. troops under UN command. Suddenly, the "national interest" was a catchphrase. Realism was in vogue.

The Wilsonian impulse in U.S. foreign policy is hardly dead. It is to be expected (and indeed hoped) that the pendulum will swing back one day to a more self-confident American engagement in the world—one that is sustained, like Ronald Reagan's, by an abiding faith in America and its democratic mission. But for now, the people are understandably mistrustful of where Mr. Clinton's brand of internationalism is taking them.

Conservative internationalists need to reassure the country that they have a common-sense vision of the scope and limits of America's responsibilities. Our principal alliances must be the bedrock of our foreign policy. Maintaining an open international trading system is vital, and it depends on the health of our alliances. Our Russia policy must be grounded in geopolitical

(Continues on page 88)

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Pleasure & Its Perils

Fat Heads

PETR SKRABANEK

A FEW years ago in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, a cardiologist wrote touchingly about seeing his 4-year-old daughter, Ariel, sneaking to the fridge to have some of the ice cream her granny had bought. "From conversation around the house," he said, "she knew what foods were high in saturated fat and cholesterol and that they should be avoided." She felt guilty, and her daddy felt guilty about her guilt. He also felt guilty that he had not yet measured her cholesterol, but he consoled himself that "there is no uniform agreement among all experts on when to start screening small children." Poor Ariel!

In the 1930s and 1940s, a high-fat diet was recommended by the medical profession as the diet for health. In the 1950s, dairy fats and meat became suspect as causing heart disease. But as late as 1966 the National Academy of Sciences and the National Research Council, in their report on dietary fats and health, could still maintain that there was not enough evidence of benefit from dramatically reduced fat consumption, and they expressed concern that such a change could have "unpredictable, possibly deleterious effects."

There has been no new evidence since 1966 to reverse this wise counsel. What has changed is the readiness of various expert committees to issue guidelines that are not supported by evidence and are often in conflict with it. In 1970, for example, a group of American experts, led by the indefatigable anti-cholesterol campaigner Jeremiah Stamler, issued specific guidelines for all Americans, including infants, pregnant women, and the elderly, exhorting them to avoid butter, egg yolk, bacon, lard, and suet. Suddenly all food was divided into "good" and "bad," "healthy" and "unhealthy." These guidelines were adopted by the American Medical Association without any evidence that such a diet would prolong life.

One critic, K. A. Oster, pointed out in 1974 that these "recommendations of major dietary changes, with wasteful neglect of nutritious foods, such as butter, eggs, whole milk, cheeses, and beef, borders on irresponsibility and smacks of medical quackery." He correctly predicted that "the scare technique employed by the apostles of lowering serum cholesterol will create hypochondriacs who are afraid to eat wholesome food."

This panic has now spread to all kinds of foods and beverages. If an example is needed, it suffices to quote the case of an American hostage during the Gulf War who, having been kept blindfolded and handcuffed for two days without food, was offered a mug of tea by his Arab captors. He refused to drink it because it contained caffeine.

In 1976 the British Royal College of Physicians and the British Cardiac Society followed the American example of dietary dirigisme and issued more or less identical guidelines for Britons. One of the recommendations was to reduce fat consumption to 35 per cent of total energy intake. There was no justification for this figure. In the so-called Seven Countries Study—which until then was the main prop of the hypothesis that a fatty diet is closely related to heart disease, and which was thought (erroneously) to provide evidence for cholesterol as the villain—Crete, with one of the lowest incidences of heart disease, had a total fat intake of 40 per cent, which was the

Dr. Skrabanek, who died last year, was a fellow of Trinity College and of Ireland's Royal College of Physicians. This article is adapted from his 1994 book, The Death of Humane Medicine, *published by the Social Affairs Unit.*

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same as in the UK. In the Netherlands, which had one of the highest life expectancies in Europe, the percentage of total energy derived from fat was a staggering 48, while among the Masai of East Africa, 66 per cent of whose calories came from fat, blood cholesterol was extremely low and atherosclerosis rare.

Similarly, the recommendation by countless committees to increase the consumption of polyunsaturated fats to 10 per cent of daily intake (or about one-third of one's total fat consumption) was not supported by any evidence that it would promote health. On the contrary, polyunsaturated fatty acids are potentially carcinogenic when used in excess, and in the Seven Countries Study the lowest rates of heart disease were recorded in populations that got only 3 to 7 per cent of their calories from polyunsaturated fats.

BY THE end of the 1980s, the general formula for a "correct" diet, adopted by "consensus" committees around the world, was: fat down to 30 per cent, with an equal ratio of saturated, monounsaturated, and polyunsaturated fats; cholesterol intake less than 300 milligrams a day; sodium intake down to 3 grams a day. (The magic number 3 is reminiscent of Grimm's fairy tales.) These recommendations were promulgated without any evidence from population studies that such a diet was beneficial. As E. H. Ahrens pointed out in *The Lancet*, the only studies available at that time (the Los Angeles veterans trial and the Finnish mental-hospital trial) used different kinds of diet. Thus the proponents of the new diet were, as Ahrens put it, apparently "willing to advocate an untested diet to the nation on the basis of suggestive evidence obtained in tests of a different diet."

Panic set in when the Senate Select Committee on Nutrition and Human Needs claimed that the U.S. diet "rep-

Gentlemen of the Leaf

THERE is a quiet revolution afoot. To be more exact, it's a counter-revolution. And while it is unlikely ever to become shrill or vulgar, it may soon be rather less quiet. Unostentatiously, a large number of "non-smokers" are taking up smoking good-quality cigars. The New Gentlemen of the Leaf are not boxing promoters, movie moguls, or arriviste used-car salesmen. Several are not even men. They are mostly professional, middle-aged—and long-time ex-smokers.

Richard is 54. Like many of his generation, he smoked in his teens and early twenties—mostly cigarettes, with the odd cigar. Also like many of them, he gave up in his mid twenties, without artificial aids, counseling, or any other magic (a possibility which the healthists' dogma about smoking as addiction ignores). He gave up because he was smoking a lot, and it was easier, at least in his circumstances then, to give up than to cut down. For a quarter-century, he did not smoke, and still doesn't most of the time.

During those years, unlike some rude ex-smokers, he never forgot the sheer pleasure of smoking and was tolerant of guests who smoked. He found cigarette smoke neither a significant nuisance nor a temptation. What he did enjoy was the scent of others' cigars, and not any cigars, but whopping Caribbean, and as often as possible Cuban, cigars. So much so that several years ago he started buying cigars to offer to his guests, not only out of hospitable duty but also for that wonderful—look, do you mind if I sit a little nearer, blow the smoke my way, would you?—smell.

Five years ago, he smoked one himself. And since then he has smoked a cigar as infrequently as one every two months, as often as a couple a week. They are always big, high-quality cigars. In five years he has never found that smoking a cigar after dinner makes him crave one at 7 A.M. the next day with his orange juice. He has not found it the least effort to keep to about 25 a year. And he has found that several of his acquaintances have gone through roughly the same phases. The sum of it is that there is now a small but significant number of men (and a few women), affluent, educated chaps who smoke in a way that the anti-smoking zealots claim is impossible. The New Gentlemen of the Leaf smoke rarely, contentedly, in a civilized way, an elitist way, as a refined pleasure rather like a large Armagnac. Some of them become interested in their pleasure and start buying and keeping cigars as a sort of hobby, rather like keeping a cellar. Nothing could be further from the image of the masses slavishly obeying the seductive advertisements of exploitative multinationals.

Perhaps it is something to do with thresholds. The anti-smoking zealots, unlike the anti-drinking zealots, do not admit that small quantities might be safe or that small quantities might not inevitably lead to larger quantities. Yet there is a scientific literature on thresholds. Some commentators argue that correlations between smoking and ill health do not start to emerge until people smoke, say, five to eight cigarettes a day. This idea is anathema to the zealots, which is further evidence that they are indeed zealots. Consequently, Richard is a serious embarrassment to them.

I said the counter-revolution was quiet. But Richard and his chums are getting tired of restaurants, clubs, and theaters that are intolerant of their civilized pleasure. Richard now phones first, and a venue that announces its intolerance does not get the $200 he might spend with his friends on dinner. The class and income of the New Gentlemen mean that just as restaurants think they have the whole smoking thing sewn up in favor of prohibition, they are starting to have to revise their prejudices. So will insurance companies. How long before one opens a risk classification for Richard that is different from the one for heavy cigarette smokers and different, but not so different, from the one for non-smokers? The New Gentlemen have shattered the shibboleths of the anti-smoking religion, not least the Manichean dogma that divides the whole world into smokers (sons of Satan) and non-smokers (angelic victims). They have also recovered the simple truth that smoking is a pleasure.

—DIGBY ANDERSON

Mr. Anderson, editor of The Loss of Virtue, *was co-editor of this supplement.*

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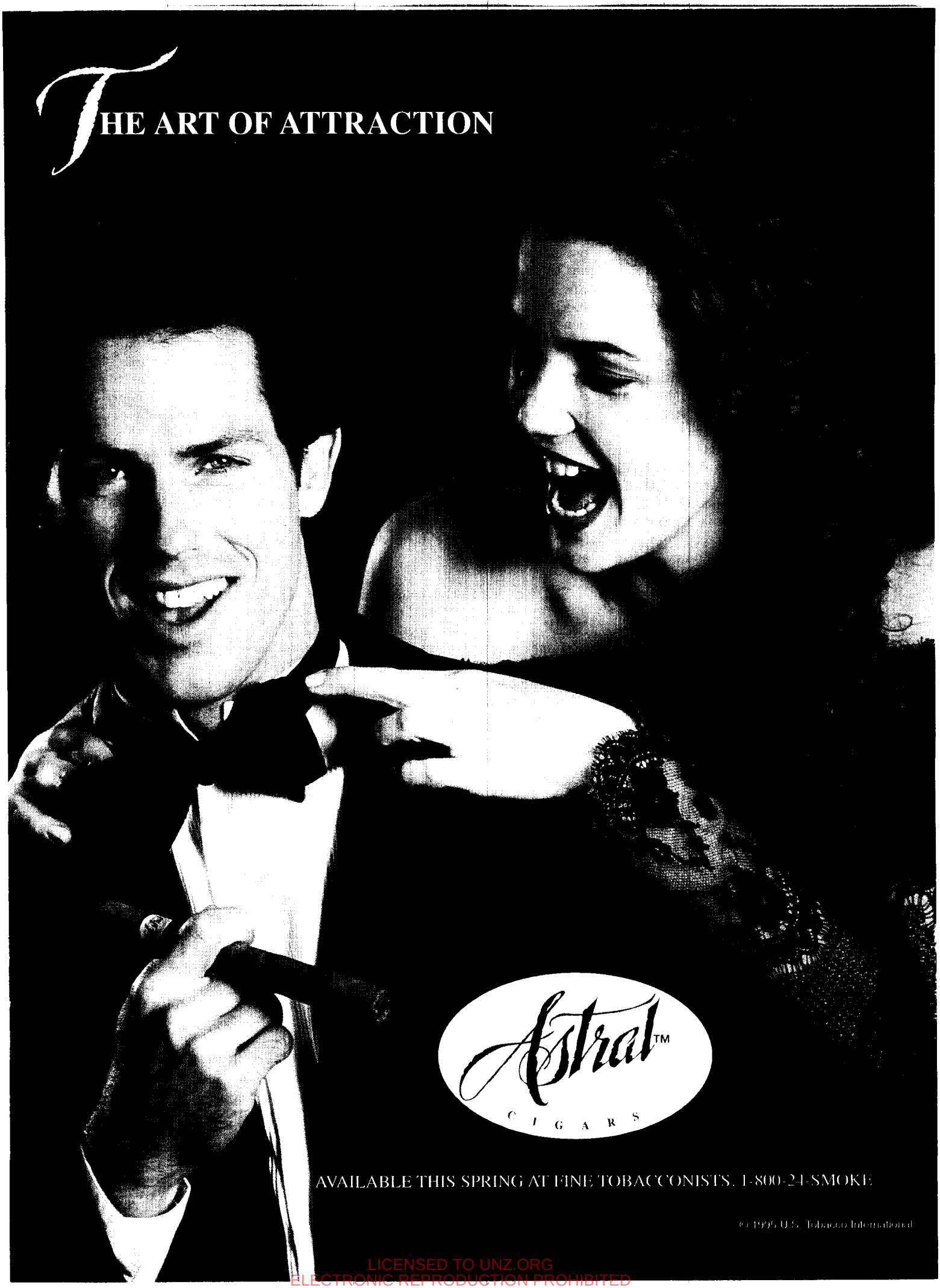

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resents as great a threat to public health as smoking" and that "six out of the ten leading causes of deaths in the U.S.A. have been linked to diet." It appears that people who eat, die. But the committee was too prestigious a body for ordinary people (or even ordinary physicians) to question, and its 1977 report, *Dietary Goals for the United States*, has become a blueprint for other countries.

One of the rare critics of the committee's report was Alfred Harper, who complained that the recommendations drew unwarranted conclusions from insufficient and inappropriate research. Harper, a distinguished professor of biochemistry and nutrition, was puzzled over how the same diet could be recommended to all Americans, "irrespective of the nature of their health problems or whether they were ill or well." As Henri de Mondeville wrote in his book on surgery, "Anyone who believes that the same thing can be suited to everyone is a great fool, since medicine is practiced not on mankind in general, but on every individual in particular." What de Mondeville could not foresee was that, seven hundred years later, whole nations would have become patients in a game of dietary procrusteanism.

A critical examination of the diet–heart hypothesis reveals numerous uncertainties and discrepancies, including the failure to demonstrate 1) that the recommended diet will significantly reduce blood cholesterol; 2) that the risk of cardiovascular disease can be lowered by reducing the level of blood cholesterol; and 3) that the proposed diet does not pose long-term health risks.

An example of confused thinking about the diet–heart hypothesis was provided by the National Institutes of Health's 1985 Consensus Conference on Lowering Blood Cholesterol as summarized in an editorial published in *JAMA*. On the one hand, the editorialist admitted that "it needs to be recognized that we do *not* [emphasis in original] yet know the cause(s) of atherosclerosis [and] it is difficult to accept on purely scientific grounds that there is conclusive proof of efficacy of reduction of mild to moderate hypercholesterolemia." He then opted for the consensus that "the fat content of your diet should constitute no more than 30 per cent (or even 20 per cent) of the total caloric intake. The saturated fat intake must be less than 10 per cent (or even 6 per cent or 8 per cent)."

In Ecclesiasticus we read: "For in multitudes of meats there shall be disease, and surfeiting shall come nigh unto colic. Because of surfeiting have many perished; but he that taketh heed shall prolong his life." This common-sense advice has been available for centuries, but it is too vague a foundation on which to build the career of a health promotionist. To make it "scientific," dietary advice must be based on specific prohibitions and recommendations, supported by statistics, academic departments, and its own jargon of "relative risks."

"Advocates of *laissez-faire* food policies," wrote J. R. Kemm in 1985, "correctly point out that virtually none of the hypotheses which underlie food policies are proved beyond all reasonable doubt." He added that even if the claims of health promotionists were true, "the unpalatable fact remains that those who benefit will be a minority while those who are inconvenienced are the majority."

ONE of the characteristic features of coercive dietary campaigns is that no one asks the consumer what he wants, presumably because the consumer would not know what is good for him. Bernard Levin asked in his London *Times* column why a free country needed any "dietary objectives" at all and why the matter should not be left to Jack Sprat and his wife, who happened to have quite different dietary requirements. But if everyone were allowed to eat what he wanted, would that not lead to anarchy? People could go so far as to have bacon and eggs for breakfast!

What impact, if any, have dietary campaigns had on population cholesterol levels? From the results of the National Food Surveys it would seem that Britons eat fewer eggs and only half as much butter as ten years ago, their sugar consumption has gone down, they drink more low-fat milk, and the proportion of polyunsaturated fats in their diet has increased. Despite all these efforts by brainwashed Britons, population plasma cholesterol remained the same. This ambiguous situation of "progress" and "stagnation" at the same time has been exploited in the propaganda of health activists: if they want to show that their prescription is working, they point to "positive" changes in the nation's eating habits; if they want to make the case that Britain is the sick man of Europe, they point to unchanging mean cholesterol levels and ask for more money to pursue their dream.

The sloppiness of official guidelines, the lack of intellectual rigor, the mindless bureaucratese in which they are written, the blatant disregard for facts, and the careless misrepresentation of evidence would suggest not a conspiracy but a bandwagon. For example, the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans*, issued jointly in 1990 by the U.S. Departments of Agriculture and Health and Human Services, state that "as cholesterol increases above 200 mg/dl greater risk for heart disease occurs." This is misleading on several counts. First, it implies that a cholesterol level of, say, 210 is more dangerous than a level of 200. There is no evidence for this. Secondly, it implies that a level below 200 is better. Such a cut-off is purely arbitrary and has no clinical significance. Thirdly, it implies that it is desirable for people to strive to have their cholesterol reduced to or below 200 mg/dl. Not only is this not desirable, but it could be dangerous. J. W. Frank and colleagues, writing in the *Journal of Clinical Epidemiology* (1992), plausibly suggested that reducing cholesterol below 225 mg/dl could *increase* mortality. These speculations, for obvious reasons, had to be kept away from the man in the street, as his "compliance" in eating a "national diet" might be weakened.

More recently the idea was floated that we should all adopt a "Mediterranean diet." There is no doubt that the Spaniards, the French, the Italians, and the Greeks enjoy their cuisine, their drinks, and *l'amour*. But the engineers of our diet do not mean this when they talk about the "Mediterranean diet"; they just mean olive oil and greens. The simplistic reasoning behind this idea is based on the observation that in Mediterranean countries the mortality from coronary heart disease is lower than in Britain or the United States. Yet people in the Mediterranean region do not on average live any longer than the British; they simply die of something else. The life expectancy at birth for English men in 1988 was 73 years, the same as for French and Italian men.

Similarly, the Chinese population has been presented as an example of

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what could be achieved in the Western countries by reducing blood cholesterol. Chinese peasants are said to have very low blood cholesterol and very low mortality from heart disease. We are not told how long they live, but we do learn that nearly half of all their deaths are from cancer. There is little difference in overall mortality between those with the lowest cholesterol and those with the highest cholesterol. Yet the message is clear: Follow the Chinese.

The Japanese are even more intriguing. They eat strange things, but they have the highest life expectancy in the world. And heart disease in Japan is far lower than even in the Mediterranean countries. So why not eat Japanese? The silence of the consensus experts on this issue is deafening, perhaps because they would have a hard time explaining the record of the last few decades: between the 1950s and the 1980s, the Japanese increased their consumption of saturated fats and maintained their phenomenally high rates of smoking, but their heart-disease rate continued to drop, by a further 30 per cent.

The "unhealthy" consumption of saturated fats has also been accompanied by an inexplicable decrease in heart disease in Switzerland and Italy. And in the Framingham study conducted in England during the last thirty years, everything went well as far as the "risk factors" (smoking, blood pressure, blood cholesterol) were concerned, but, inexplicably, heart disease in middle-aged men went up. The "experts" did not seem to notice.

IN 1991, while Africa was facing famine on a more catastrophic scale than ever before, the World Health Organization issued a two-hundred-page document, *Diet, Nutrition, and the Prevention of Chronic Diseases*, prescribing the "correct" diet for the whole world—that is, the "prudent" diet of health-obsessed Americans. WHO warned that "cardiovascular diseases and cancer will emerge, or be established as substantial health problems, in virtually every country in the world by the year 2000." This was a curious *volte-face* for an organization whose official slogan is "Health for All by the Year 2000." With the increasing problems of overpopulation, hunger, poverty, famine, and wars in developing countries, it is difficult to see how the same countries will, within the next few years, adopt the evil, unhealthy diet of the West, and then become victims of those "diseases of civilization" prevalent in countries with a life expectancy of between seventy and eighty years.

The report said fat was "linked" to breast cancer and colon cancer. In fact, these cancers were also "linked" to GNP and to the number of cars, televisions, and washing machines. The report admitted that the trends in coronary heart disease in various countries were "largely unexplained" yet went on to call for "an urgent rethink on agricultural and food policy" to prevent coronary heart disease by the year 2000. This is a familiar argument of consensus committees: If we don't know what to do, then let's do it with vigor.

The report claimed that "no lower limit to serum cholesterol has been identified below which a beneficial reduction in coronary heart disease cannot be expected." Indeed, "the optimal intake of cholesterol is probably zero, meaning the avoidance of animal products." The WHO report stopped short of endorsing world vegetarianism, however, because in poor countries, to quote the chairman of the group, Philip James, "iron deficiency is affecting the brain development of children, and for them the best way of avoiding that is to include a little meat in the diet." A little. Once they pass puberty, they can forget meat.

As WHO's advice was not based on science, it was important that it should be repeated often enough to make it true. The report recommended employing all possible means to disseminate the message: "The Ministry of Health in countries where the government controls the radio and television should take steps to ensure that other sections of the mass media . . . are also involved, so that the public perceives the information to be of relevance to them, as well as beneficial to the government. . . . It is also recommended that governments recruit specialists in behavioral manipulation who can assess the best way of amplifying the community action."

There are times when the term "health fascism" does not seem to be an exaggeration. In the envisioned system of information monopoly, "beneficial to the government," it will be virtually impossible for critical voices to be heard and to have an open discussion of evidence that contradicts the official line. While wars, disease, and famine rage, the loyal citizens of the Health for All by the Year 2000 Utopia will be instructed by the Ministry of True Lifestyle to measure the amount of fiber in their food and to weigh their bulky stools. Being no longer civilized, they will not suffer from the diseases of civilization. □

"Would you please tell him this isn't a fun flight?"

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Hotel Highs (and Lows)

WILLIAM A. RUSHER

IT ALL began so nicely. I had just arrived at Hong Kong's Kai Tak Airport, gone through Immigration, and reclaimed my luggage, and was looking for one of Hong Kong's tacky little taxis to take me to the newly opened and *very* posh Regent Hotel on Kowloon's magnificent esplanade, overlooking the famous harbor. A representative of the Regent approached me, asked my name, and found it on a list he was carrying. Without further ado I was escorted to a Bentley limousine (a twin brother of the one Queen Elizabeth gads about in) and placed reverently in the back seat. A lap-robe of what appeared to be chinchilla (at any rate it had the same grey color and the same infinitely soft fur) was tucked around my legs, and I was wafted off, by a uniformed chauffeur, to the hotel. This, I told myself, was a way of life to which I could easily become accustomed. It wasn't until I was checking out several days later that I discovered on my bill a big fat charge for the memorable ride.

The Regent isn't the only Hong Kong hotel that provides Bentleys and Rollses for its guests' convenience (the Peninsula does too), but it is the only hotel that ever inveigled me into one and then nicked me royally for the experience. Perhaps an overeager employee simply neglected to explain that there was a charge, but the memory (as you can see) rankles to this day. Maybe he thought I was King Farouk traveling incognito.

As an inveterate globetrotter, with five circumnavigations and innumerable other journeys under my belt, I have had my innings with all sorts of hotels, and I am glad to say that the vast majority of them were pleasant. Hotels are, inevitably, a major feature of most trips, and often one of the best. What fun it would have been to stay successively in all of the Big Seven hotels that marked the passage of well-heeled Englishmen around the world in the good old days when it was still a plus to be English: Shepheard's in Cairo, the Mount Nelson in Cape Town, the Taj Mahal in Bombay, the Oriental in Bangkok, Raffles in Singapore, the Peninsula in Hong Kong, and the Imperial in Tokyo.

Born too late (and not English), I have had to pick them off one by one, and even then I missed two: the original Shepheard's burned down before I got to Cairo, and circumstances confined me to a drink in the bar, instead of a room overnight, at the Taj Mahal. The old, low-slung Imperial is now gone too, but the management of its towering successor has, for the solace of nostalgiacs, thoughtfully constructed a bar out of the volcanic bricks that Frank Lloyd Wright used in the original. The other four are still extant, however (albeit with new "tower wings" to handle the overflow), and I can heartily recommend them all.

I CANNOT do as much, I am afraid, for the Hotel Savoy in Cuzco, Peru. Any resemblance between this hostelry and its eponym on the Strand in London is strictly imaginary. It is 12,500 feet up on the Peruvian *altiplano*, where the air is so thin that I awoke gasping whenever I fell asleep and my breathing slowed down. That, to be sure, wasn't the Savoy's fault. But my dinner entree in the hotel's restaurant was: a portion of "roast pork" that was easily the nastiest and most intractable piece of gristle I have ever seen on a plate.

Another feature of the Savoy was more endearing. Behind my door was a framed series of warnings on various subjects, posted there by the hotel staff and written in what is sometimes called Spanglish. Almost all of them were hilarious, but only one survives in my memory: "The management is irresponsible for jewelry."

Speaking of thin air reminds me of The Hotel That Got Away. In December 1980, finding myself in Katmandu, Nepal, I booked a side trip (by air) to the Everest View Hotel, a Japanese-owned hostelry perched at 13,000 feet on a ridge in the Himalayas, with a relatively close-up view of Mt. Everest. For the comfort of guests, there is an oxygen bottle in every room (a courtesy I commend to the Savoy). I was to fly, in a small but plucky plane, to an "altiport" (they didn't even call it an "airport") from which it was reportedly only a brief ride by yak-wagon to the hotel. Unfortunately, a snowstorm closed the altiport on the day I was supposed to fly there, and it stayed closed until after I had, regretfully, left Nepal.

But back to unpleasant hotel experiences. I suppose everyone has an anecdote about a crooked concierge, and yours may well trump mine. My protagonist presides, or presided, over the desk in one of Venice's finest hotels (which I shall not name, since its responsibility for his behavior was only indirect). I asked him to get me a ticket to *Falstaff* at the Teatro la Fenice, and he did so. When I checked out a few days later, being in a bit of a hurry, I paid the hotel bill and his (separate) bill, plus a handsome tip, without tarrying to inspect it carefully. When I finally got around to it, a day or two later, I discovered that he had charged me more than double the price of the ticket (including agent's fees, taxes, etc.). A letter to the management, I'm glad to say, produced a prompt refund.

Then there is the Hotel Caravelle in Saigon—or Ho Chi Minh City, as liberals now call it. When I was there in 1967, just before the Tet Offensive, it vied with the Continental across the square for the honor of being Saigon's finest. Jeff Bell, who had been an *NR* staffer and is now a noted Washington writer, had come up from the Mekong Delta (where, as an American soldier, he was assigned to an ARVN division) to show me around. Thinking to treat him to a good meal for a change, I took him up to the Caravelle's Sky Room, a giddy nine floors above the street. He ordered spaghetti with meat sauce, and all went well until I spied in his spaghetti a large, well sauced, and very dead cockroach. The waiter was almost as mortified as I was, but Jeff passed it off superbly: "Bill, when you've picked as many bugs out of your food as I have recently, one more just doesn't matter."

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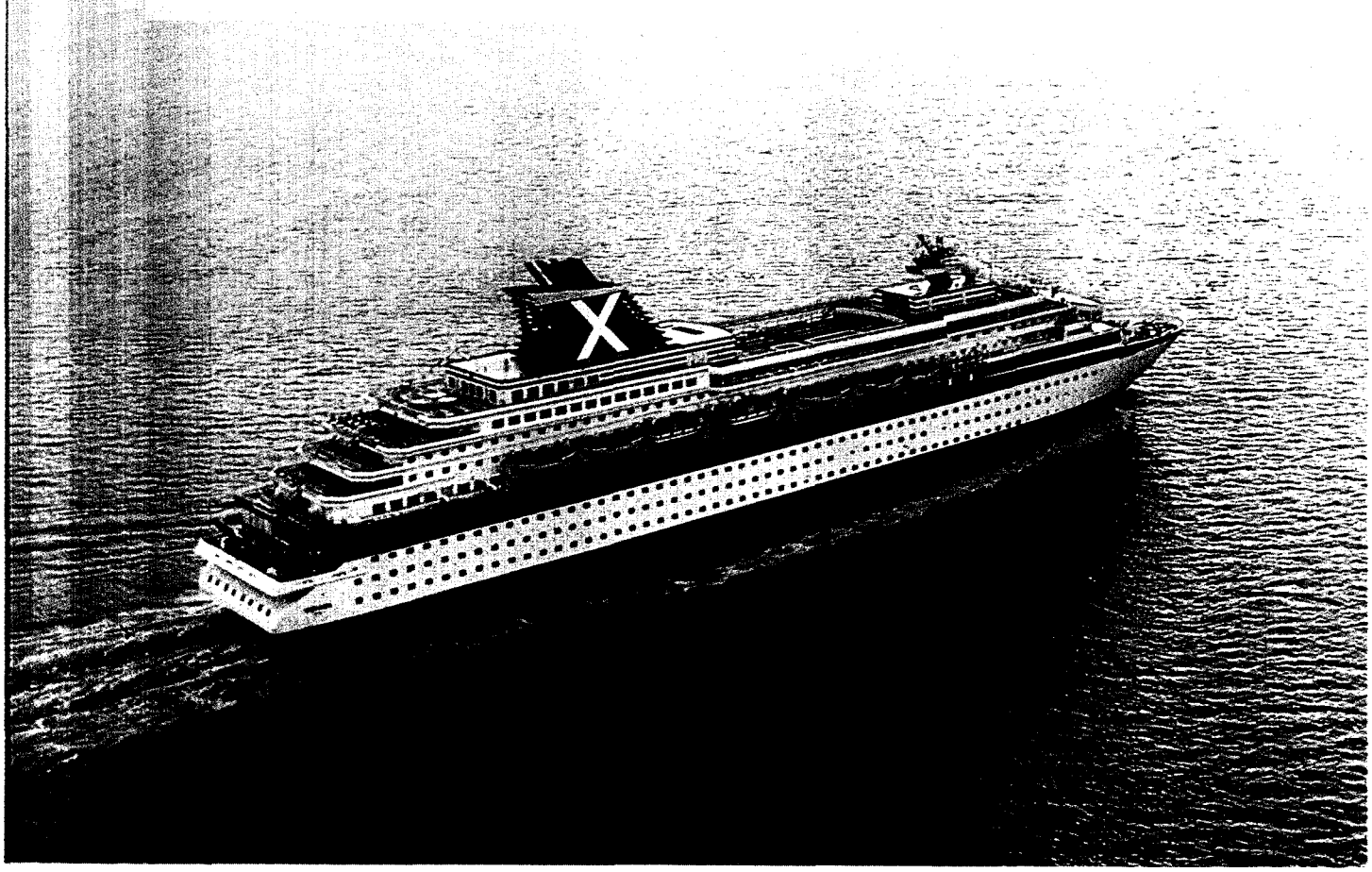
An Experience Like This Usually Begins With The Words "Once Upon A Time."



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I suppose there are more horror stories about the hotels in Moscow than in all the rest of the genre put together, but I'm afraid that in this case I will have to defer to others. I didn't get to Russia (partly because of what I'd heard about the hotels) until 1993, and the two I stayed in—the Metropole in Moscow and the Grand Hotel Europe in St. Petersburg—had both just been refurbished at huge expense. In the case of the Metropole this has resulted in a hostelry roughly equivalent to a good if slightly old-fashioned commercial hotel in any large American city. The Grand Hotel Europe is something else again—modern, luxurious, and efficient (perhaps because it's run by Finns).

And my candidate for the world's best hotel? There's no such thing, of course—there are lots of wonderful ones. But I'm still purring over a weekend I spent, not long ago, at the Ritz-Carlton in Laguna Niguel, California. □

Pretended Pleasures

DAVID KLINGHOFFER

CONSIDER the following scenarios: a) At a party, a fellow sidles up beside people richer, better-looking, and better socially connected than he is. When any of them cracks even the lamest joke, the sidler lets out a huge, barking laugh like a sea lion, attracting looks of pity and annoyance. b) In the course of the film *Pulp Fiction*, Uma Thurman has a huge syringe plunged into her chest. At one screening a woman in the audience had the common decency to pass out in horror, causing the film to be shut off while paramedics were called to the scene. However, most audience members in chic urban neighborhoods don't pass out. They laugh uproariously, not only at this act of appalling, meaningless violence but at all the other ones in *Pulp Fiction*.

At a superficial level, the man at the party and the audience at the movie seem be doing the same thing: pretending to enjoy something (bad jokes, a bad movie) that, one assumes, they couldn't really enjoy. But people fake pleasure for different reasons, and why they do so reveals something about them and the times they live in.

Two types of faked pleasure have, like the poor, always been with us. One is to be commended. Guests pretend to enjoy the food they are served at a friend's home, no matter how unappetizing. At a wedding, one never fails to note the beauty of the bride, even if she is far from beautiful. Motivated by an aversion to hurting somebody's feelings, these are simply good manners.

A second type of pleasure is faked in the hope of social, monetary, or other forms of advancement. The man at the party wants what we all want: to be thought well of by people we admire. He laughs at lame jokes in return for the approval of the socially or financially superior person he's talking to, who might say to himself: "Hey, this guy enjoys my sense of humor. Maybe he's not such a sap after all."

At least with these varieties of manufactured enthusiasm, the manufacturer knows he's faking it: the distinction between the pleasurable and non-pleasurable isn't wholly lost. That's not the case with a more modern type of fake pleasure. I first came across it in 1986, at a theater with a college crowd watching Spike Lee's first movie, *She's Gotta Have It*. Though allegedly a comedy, the movie wasn't funny—you'll have to take my word for it. Yet the audience was cracking up from start to finish.

None of the moviegoers was worried about hurting Spike Lee's feelings, nor could anyone hope to advance his career or social standing by laughing. In the years since, I've encountered the same reaction to all kinds of art and entertainment—mostly when the artist or entertainer is "of color," or at least foreign. Go to a bad foreign film (not hard to do, since most foreign films *are* bad), and you will find an audience whooping it up (if it's a comedy) or squinting in feigned concentration (if it's a drama) as if they were watching a true masterpiece.

THIS is easier to account for than it might seem at first. There is a natural human craving to be thought of as virtuous. In earlier generations, when ideas of right and wrong came from holy books instead of politics, virtue was defined by action: chivalry, self-sacrifice, regular bathing. Now, though, virtue is defined by attitude. One virtuous attitude is the appreciation of cultures thought to be the victims of historical oppression. Thus, anyone who laughs at a "comedy" by Spike Lee, a black man, is virtuous. Anyone who claims to feel moved by the novels of Gabriel García Márquez, a Latin American, is likewise a paragon of virtue.

What about *Pulp Fiction*? And for that matter any David Lynch film, any work of art by Bruce Nauman or Cindy Sherman? A different attitude—signifying not so much modern virtuousness as modern wisdom—consists of recognizing the absurdity of the godless universe we're told we live in, a chaotic, random place beset by meaningless violence. The naïve response to the meaninglessness of life would be paralysis; the wise—maybe a better word would be "cool"—response is the one you hear at screenings of *Pulp Fiction*: laughter.

But contemporary ideas about virtue don't depend entirely on attitude. They call for action, too. Or, more accurately, abstention from certain actions. If the universe is meaningless, then after death comes nothing: and so the greatest value is placed on staying alive as long as possible. This, we are informed by doctors, rules out overindulgence in food, drink, and smokable dried plants. In the days when men overwhelmingly believed in God, virtuous action required abstaining from things that would make God angry, things that might prompt Him to deprive you of life in the next world. Now, with God out of the picture, virtuous action is defined as abstaining from anything that might prematurely deprive you of life in this world: fatty foods, booze, and, above all, cigarettes.

Of course, as in the old days, one wants not merely to be virtuous but to appear that way to others. Hence the rise of fake pleasures notable only for

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their safety, enjoyed not privately but in public and accompanied by a surplus of chatter that strains to appear enthusiastic.

In the Eighties, there were "water bars": "bars" that attracted connoisseurs of, yes, plain old H_2O, from exotic parts of the globe. Apparently intelligent men and women enthused wildly over a glass of water from France, Ecuador, or Thailand. The water bars were followed by the coffee bars, which were followed by the recent craze for cigars. In Manhattan, a Starbucks will soon be found on every other corner. The first restaurant for cigar smokers has already opened.

The feature pages of the smarter newspapers are now full of fashionable urbanites dwelling on the merits of one coffee over another, one cigar over another. (Thankfully, we don't hear much any more about water.) Today, one chooses not a double bourbon but a double espresso; not a cigarette (which is inhaled) but a cigar (which is not).

Why? Because by frequenting coffee bars you signal your distaste for the old-fashioned, sinful kind of bar where alcohol and tobacco are ingested. In sticking to safe pleasures such as a cigar, and extolling them as if they were the real thing, a person declares his allegiance to the leading ideology of the day: the same one that compels fake enthusiasm for mediocre art by earnest "people of color" and meaninglessly violent art by cool white people; that replaces the old worries about sin with an equally powerful concern for safety; that in fact makes endangering your own or anyone else's safety the only sin still possible to commit, and pallid abstention the truest virtue. That ideology, of course, is secular left-liberalism, which took God from us and now seeks to take away even the consolation of genuine pleasure. □

Let It Pour

QUENTIN LETTS

SOURS, slings, cups, coolers, toddies, daisies, highballs, shrubs, daiquiris, nightcaps, cobblers, cubas, rickeys, fixes, fizzes, flips, vodkas, vermouths, kirschwassers, pale ales, absinthe, aquavit, porter, and gin. Creme Yvette? Lillet? An aurium, sir? Or perhaps a redeeming julep?

Health authorities tell us drinkers can die young, but we must not be surprised. Clearly, it is the worry—the worry of how to jam in all of that before you croak. Old maids will chant the cautionary mantra: "Beer and whisky, very risky." But if a man is not to mix the occasional glass, how will he ever try everything the Almighty has provided? So much to drink, so little time in which to tilt it back.

My pal Henry was a yeoman of sober preparation. At the start of a night's drinking maneuvers he would draft a list of "minimum intentions" (e.g., five different ales, some California chardonnays, a vintage port, perhaps a couple of lurid "stickies"). As the night wore on, Henry would tick off the new drinks successfully tested. Each tick may have been more wobbly than its predecessor, but Henry, when he awoke next day to the gravest of hangovers, would rest content at the thought of a job well done.

Received "form" dictates too much the habits of the drinking classes. One thinks here not so much of quantity—let the last word on that matter go to my late colleague Dr. K. C. Hutchin, who defined an alcoholic as "someone who drinks more than his doctor." Rather it is the time and organization of the drinking day that dark forces would seek to control. The British may have something to do with this, I fear. Nineteenth-century seadogs, on their umpteenth day out of Westward Ho! and with the ocean rays parching their throats, would obediently wait until the sun was "over the yardarm" before breaching the rum barrel. The "noonday gun" acted as the starting pistol on the race to alcoholic oblivion, though the quick-witted, gasping for a strong one at 11:45 A.M., were not above declaring that "the gun has sounded somewhere in the Empire."

In this age, a mug of gin at breakfast is considered coarse. Spaniards, for all their turbot poaching and frankly inexcusable flamenco dancing, have found a good way around this. They will order a breakfast cup of *café carajillo*, a well-disguised mixture of *café solo* and brandy ("Easy with that coffee, Paco"). Catalonia, at least, has yet to fall prey to the nanny health committee which will doubtless one day seek to spoil their fun. In the Eighties the champagne breakfast enjoyed a brief though creditable vogue, before falling prey to the global recession. But the rot has even reached southern Italy. In a villa near Brindisi one morning—I believe the time was 10:09 A.M.—I caused a minor sensation by asking for a "gin and It" (five parts gin, one part red vermouth). Little wonder those Italians get through so many governments.

Almost as bad as the clucking timekeepers are those stylists who make it their business to know exactly what everyone has in his glass. In my bartender days I had a regular called Ally, a veteran of the Kaiser's War whose preprandial preference was a half pint of English ale "with a stick." Ally did not, by this, mean a swizzle stick, or one of those colorful cocktail umbrella sticks. The old boy meant a measure of Plymouth gin, and I was happy to supply it. However, Ally would order it in a hushed voice, seemingly in shame. "Stand up, coward!" I wanted to cry, before remembering that here was a veteran of the Somme. Only later did it dawn that Ally's whisper may simply have indicated a misanthropic desire not to be overheard by his cronies and thus be stung for the cost of a whole round of drinks.

Drinks can suffer from a negative image, but we should forgo our disapproval. In Dublin, young girls from the office typing pool will gather at day's end over glasses of "Guinness and black": thick, creamy stout flecked with black-currant cordial. In the cheaper dives along Florida's Atlantic coastline, Malibu, a coconut spirit, has a certain following when combined with pineapple juice. South American grandmothers will fight like pigeons over the worm in the tequila bottle, while the Japanese like to chill out over a pot of rice wine, served near boiling temperature. All these drinks

Mr. Letts writes for the Daily Telegraph.

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are quite revolting, but long may they flourish.

ONE day the Northern Ireland soccer team was scheduled to play a match in London. The commuter airliners from Belfast were full of heavy-drinking football fans. By the time the stewards' drinks trolley had reached the seventh row of the economy cabin it was practically empty, but the fans were not vanquished. "Very well then," one of the Belfasters was heard to say. "If that is all you have left, Tia Maria and tomato juice it will simply have to be." In the tradition of Hayek and Thatcher, Reagan and Miss Fawn Hall, here was a man prepared "to think the unthinkable."

There is always a time for the derided bottle of *vin ordinaire*. Indeed, sometimes (and not just when you are picking up the check) it suits the occasion better than a château-bottled claret. There are times in the Third World, after you've waited a day for a tardy train, that your lower molars, having been ground to paste, will welcome the anaesthetic properties of Malagasy rum. Ibizencan hierbas may reek of toothpaste, but what a boon that can be when your breath smells like a boar's ear and you find yourself standing beside a beauteous brunette. Who, awaking in a parched condition, has not fumbled for and drained the nearest glass, and then been pleasantly surprised (astonished, even) to find that it was that toothsome seltzer, an unfinished beaker of Asti Spumante? Raw poteen, bought off the back of a donkey in County Clare, can numb your eardrums—useful in the land of maudlin ballad singers and penny whistles. And the restorative powers of Fernet Branca show, should we have doubted it, that the Bolivian conifer does not fall in vain.

And when that worry becomes too much, when you fear that life is simply not long enough for the consumption of every liquor God sent, there is always Count Esterhazy's *Bohle*. For this astonishing confection I am grateful to my lawyer and soulmate Jeremy Leasor, who describes it as "the meanest aphrodisiac known to man, or woman." It is, he states, "sure to have your party guests grappling on the staircase like stoats." Peel six oranges and a lemon and slice them into a large bowl that stands on crushed ice. Cover with six ounces of confectioners' sugar and leave for thirty minutes. Add a bottle of Riesling or Niersteiner, a bottle of Beaujolais, two measures of brandy, two measures of Triple Sec or Curaçao (a use for that foul brew at last!), and leave to stand. Shortly before serving, add a bottle of sparkling white wine or, if you work for the United Nations, of champagne.

Esterhazy's one-eyed English butler worked the recipe to perfection, and court balls in Hungary, where the *Bohle* was served, were noted for their sport. Comrade Leasor quotes from a Fifties publication, *The Daily Telegraph Party Book*: "The first glass quenches thirst, the second gives enjoyment. The third creates romance. The effects of the fourth are not recorded." □

Drinking Paraphernalia

A PANEL on a TV program was earnestly discussing the problem of the day: what to do with a bottle of wine. Drink it? No, no, what to do when you have drunk it. Throw it away? No, what to do with a bottle of wine when you have drunk some of it but there is some still left. Stick a cork in it? No, what to do when you don't want to drink it again for several days. Their answers were something to do with tablets, ascorbic acid, aerosols, and a new sort of inflatable bag which keeps out the air.

And that's the first lesson to learn about drinking accessories. Most of them are fit only for people who do not drink properly, generously, convivially. Proper chaps never re-stopper a bottle of wine—and that goes for port and sherry too. And they don't buy insertable plastic bags, gas-operated corkscrews, or raffia tilted baskets.

Accessory enthusiasts are, of course, perverts. The crystal tumbler becomes a substitute for the whisky, and the Bavarian mug with the name of the beer on it is beer drinking obscenely transformed into a variety of collection mania. Collectors pride themselves on their professionalism, and good convivial drinking depends on a spirit of amateurism. There is nothing worse when you are having a nice chat and plowing through a well-made cocktail or tankard of champagne than some fool proudly showing you his decanters or his labeling equipment or, worst of all, loading you with books, charts, or photographs showing where the olive in the cocktail comes from. There is nothing wrong in casual chat about a drink when you are drinking it. But this age needs to remember the manners of better ages: earnestly talking about the contents of one's glass at receptions or dinner is simply bad form.

Of course, you do need some equipment. Good drinkers like thin glasses rather than flower vases. They do not drink wine out of thimbles (mean) or giant goldfish bowls (vulgar). Both chaps and girls always carry a simple knife, bottle opener, and corkscrew, but not a vast object with instruments for taking things out of horses' hooves. Perhaps most neglected of all, good drinkers are not egalitarians, let alone similitudinarians. There is no reason why everyone should be forced to have the same glass as everyone else. Restaurants, we know, are run along these Marxist lines (they were, after all, born in the French Revolution). They insist that everyone have the same sized chair regardless of the size of his or her bottom, identical equipment, and, increasingly, identical portions regardless of appetite. But we do not have to behave like that at home.

A while ago, many English pubs served beer in silver or pewter tankards provided by the customers but kept in the pub, a different shape or type of tankard for each customer. I particularly remember the excellent beer in the Wrotham Arms in Broadstairs. For a long time I wondered why the same make of beer elsewhere did not have quite that special tang. It was, of course, their particular silver polish which deserved the credit. I digress. The rules for drinking equipment are four: minimal, practical, individual, and not a topic for discussion while drinking. —DIGBY ANDERSON

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A Matter of Taste

JACOB SULLUM

MICHAEL Jacobson wants us to know that he is not a fanatic. Over the years, the executive director of the Center for Science in the Public Interest (CSPI) has repeatedly confessed that he occasionally butters his bread. In a January interview with the *Dallas Morning News*, he revealed a few more sins. "I eat fat-free yogurt," he said. "Of course, there's a lot of sugar in it." Not only that, but he sometimes consumes spaghetti and bagels made from *refined* flour. He has been known to eat fish, even chicken (though not often). Mainly, though, he eats vegetables, fruits, and whole grains, which he recommends as the basis for the ideal diet. "I like my vegetables and rice as much as somebody likes their steak and french fries," he says.

You may not care about Mr. Jacobson's diet, but he cares about yours. Deeply. "I'm interested in food because what we're eating contributes to hundreds of thousands of deaths every year," the microbiologist-turned-activist told *The Progressive* last year. "The shocking thing is that food companies encourage us to eat the kind of diets that will kill us, just to make a buck. . . . They use public relations to try to get us to eat their foods, regardless of the effect it has on our health."

To counter this pernicious propaganda, for the last two decades CSPI has warned people away from fat, salt, sugar, caffeine, alcohol, beef, candy, breakfast cereals, fried food, fast food, processed food, Italian food, Chinese food, Mexican food, delicatessen food, and movie-theater popcorn, among other things. In recent years its hit-and-run reports on various cuisines, making liberal use of phrases like "artery-clogging" and "heart-stopping," have attracted heavy news coverage. After analyzing blenderized, composite samples from different restaurants, CSPI was shocked to find high levels of fat and salt in popular dishes. It called fettuccine Alfredo "a heart attack on a plate," said eating "chile rellenos is like eating a whole stick of butter," compared kung pao chicken to "four McDonald's quarter-pounders," and declared that an egg-salad sandwich "makes a Dairy Queen banana split look like a diet food." In its popcorn exposé, CSPI said a medium-sized container with butter-flavored topping has "more fat than a bacon-and-eggs breakfast, a Big-Mac-with-fries lunch, and a steak dinner with all the trimmings combined."

Critics of CSPI, including journalists, dieticians, and food-industry representatives, have called its reports alarmist, simplistic, and misleading. They've called Jacobson a "scold" and a "killjoy." But Jacobson—whose publicity stunts have included dressing as Tony the Tiger, sending a bag of decayed teeth to the Federal Trade Commission, and whacking at a fifty-pound block of vegetable shortening with a hammer and chisel on TV—says such criticism is "sophomoric." He says the columnists and editorial writers who complain about CSPI's reports have "a real know-nothing, stick-your-head-in-the-sand, blame-the-messenger-for-the-message, just-let-us-eat-fried-foods, don't-give-us-the-facts" sort of attitude. The doctors and nutritionists who say there's a place for cheeseburgers and kung pao chicken in a healthy diet are "totally misguided" and "completely irresponsible" defenders of "junky foods," a/k/a "garbage."

Jacobson says his organization, which he co-founded in 1971 after working for Ralph Nader, is simply getting out the facts about the nutritional content of common foods. "All we're doing is providing information that's never been available before," he told the *Baltimore Sun* in October. "Restaurants don't give nutritional analyses, and people unwittingly or ignorantly eat foods they wouldn't eat if they knew what was in them."

It's doubtful that diners were oblivious to the high fat content of fettuccine Alfredo until CSPI came along. In any case, Jacobson wants to do more than disseminate information; he wants to reshape attitudes. "People really do become psychologically dependent on a certain way of eating," he explained in *The Progressive*. "It's very hard to change eating habits; people stick with what they started eating as a child. . . . There are people who'll say, 'Well, I enjoy this, I like it, and when my number's up, my number's up. That's it. I don't care what you tell me.' "

Jacobson seems to think such people are suffering from a sort of false consciousness. "They don't want to have information that should suggest they change," he lamented in the *Sun*. CSPI's mission is to break through the "denial" and "resistance." Hence the scare tactics. By making one's choice of entree seem like a life-or-death issue, CSPI hopes to frighten people into eating right.

CSPI's work is dominated by the one-size-fits-all paradigm of "public health." From this perspective, it makes perfect sense to urge everyone to observe dietary restrictions that will benefit only a minority. Take salt. While too much of it aggravates certain kinds of hypertension, there is no medical reason for people in general to avoid it. Yet CSPI always considers high sodium counts in food worrisome. A high-fat diet may increase the risk of heart disease in some people, but that does not mean that fettuccine Alfredo, kung pao chicken, and chile rellenos are poison. There is no solid evidence that moderate amounts of caffeine pose a threat to otherwise healthy people. Even so, CSPI petitioned the FDA to ban it from soft drinks. Alcohol abuse can lead to serious health problems, but moderate drinking is not dangerous; in fact, it seems to reduce the risk of heart disease. Yet CSPI advocates higher taxes on alcoholic beverages to cut overall consumption.

IN ADDITION to exaggerating risks and overgeneralizing, CSPI tends to overlook the fact that people get more from food than the Recommended Daily Allowances. Though Jacobson blames the demand for fatty, salty food largely on advertising, the truth is that fat and salt *taste good*. After all, the high-fat, high-salt restaurant dishes that CSPI condemned were selected for analysis based on popularity. Sugary treats like candy and soda may be "empty calories" to Jacobson, but they are full of

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flavor. And while CSPI recommends low-fat innovations like baked tortilla chips, no-fat frozen yogurt, and low-fat cheese, they are just not the same as the real thing.

One nutritionist who understands the importance of taste is Paul Saltman, a biochemist at the University of California in San Diego. In the late 1980s he made a splash with *The California Nutrition Book*, which argues that the key to healthy eating is balance and moderation. This is not exactly a radical idea, but Saltman has generated controversy by explicitly rejecting the notion that certain foods should be renounced. He likes to defend red meat, Butterfingers, Twinkies, and other targets of nutritional zealots. "You remember when you were a kid and the lady held up the four basic food groups?" he said in a 1987 interview with the *Los Angeles Times*. "Well, what the hell is pizza? It's all of the above!"

Michael Jacobson, who prefers his pizza without cheese, is not a big fan of Paul Saltman. "If he were a historian," Jacobson told the *L.A. Times*, "he would describe how beautifully Attila the Hun combed his hair. Or he might say that Adolf Hitler brushed his teeth twice a day . . ." The parallel is telling. To Jacobson, it seems, certain foods are simply evil, with no redeeming qualities worth noting.

The bad guys include hamburgers, whole milk, soda with sugar, egg yolks, and salad dressing. The good guys include whole-wheat bread, sweet potatoes, fresh spinach, cantaloupe, and skim milk. Jacobson is optimistic that Americans will learn to favor healthier foods. "I don't think people necessarily want to kill themselves," he says. "I don't think we have a nation of masochists and suicide-prone idiots." But he concedes that if some people insist on consorting with food villains, there's not much he or CSPI can do about it. "If people want to eat this way," he says, "especially people who are informed about the risks, then fine. That's their business. We can't dictate what goes into anybody's refrigerator." The regret is palpable. □

Better Shop Around?

SHARON KING HOGE

YOU PAY your money, you take your chances. Will the gown create a sensation? Will the caviar be delectable? Will the limousine purr gently? Will the Pekinese have a good disposition? Even the most mundane purchase bears the element of risk.

But let us concern ourselves not with routine commercial transactions. Let us focus here on those ardent shoppers whose approach to merchandise is more in the spirit of big-game hunters or horse players.

Even baseball can be interesting to spectators schooled in its details, fans who trouble themselves to learn the players' individual quirks, the various team propensities. Shopping, similarly, is most compelling to those who devote themselves to the minutiae of merchandise, the connoisseurs who can walk through a department store noting in passing that Estée Lauder has fallen victim to the Santa Fe obsession in her choice of lipstick tones this year and that Geoffrey Beene is once again recycling his favorite circle motif.

Reflective shoppers weigh their options carefully. Is this the season to invest in one of Oscar de la Renta's extravagant beaded jackets, or is he apt to use a more flattering color next time? Should you spring for Bill Blass's spectacular pearl-strap cocktail dress or gamble that Victor Costa will concoct an acceptable knockoff?

The underlying challenge is to balance one's need for the item with its asking price. When our friend left her house one hot August day it had not occurred to her that she might be in want of three identical fitted velvet Ralph Lauren suits in assorted colors. But the sample sale price made them irresistible.

Too good a bargain to be true is not without pitfalls. The classic trap is the garment that does not quite fit, but will—as soon as one loses those five extra pounds. Hence the white fringed leather jacket and gold lamé tube dress that have never made an appearance outside the closet.

BUT an unbelievable price is sheer ecstasy if the item happens to be something you can actually use. Imagine the elation of the woman out on a price-comparison foray for oversized French doors who found the twenty sets she needed remaindered at a lumber yard for pennies.

In serious shopping, as in comedy, timing is all. Should you buy it now or wait until you need it? The decorator who left the perfect yellow brocade behind in a Paris shop spent dozens of annoying hours the next year trying to find a substitute. Whereas another designer has ended up with a garage full of overcarved settees and divans waiting for the client who might want to furnish a Victorian cottage.

This matter of timing is particularly perilous when one yearns for the item but doesn't really need it. What if you wait to buy the navy-edged bathing suit? Will it still be on the rack here at Saks, and maybe even reduced in price, next spring when the weather's warm enough to wear it? Devotees establish cruising paths to monitor items they're waiting to buy on sale, moving methodically from the burlap espadrilles, to the shocking pink cashmere shawls, to the "Bad Hair Day" baseball caps, in vigilant hope of the first signs of a markdown.

International shopping doubles these challenges. A Chanel suit always used to be cheaper at the flagship Paris store on the Rue Cambon. Now the dollar's decline has turned the old rules upside down. If you wait, will it cost less back home at Bergdorf's?

Hesitation can result in post-vacation angst. Leave behind the blue canvas pocketbook in the Vienna boutique, and you may spend a full morning telephoning all your Austrian friends until one agrees to run over to Ringstrasse and pick it up to mail to you.

Flea-market shopping, with one-of-a-kind merchandise and bargaining de rigueur, is the ultimate challenge. Adhering to the Moscow Rule espoused

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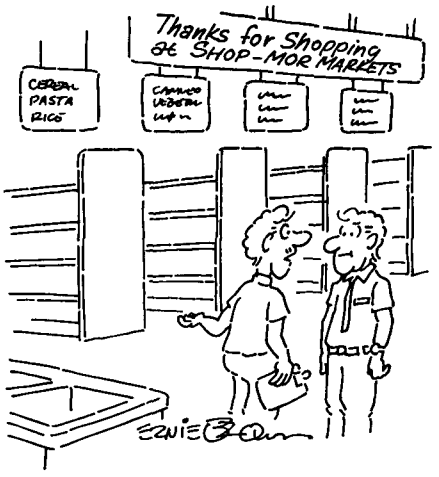
by shopping guru Suzy Gershman minimizes the fun. "If you like it, buy it," she cautions. "Don't expect it to be there if you wait to come back." Of course if you do wait, you're apt to be able to buy it for less. But then . . . For every tale of the antique pine washstand you got, there's the converse woe of the one that got away. Decades later, disappointed devotees can reel off the list—an antique Army knife, an aqua hobnail glass bowl, a set of Burma Shave signs, the Mercedes Benz gearshift handle.

When the color isn't quite right, the proportions are a little off, the risk is intensified. An iron vined picture frame with green enamel shamrocks tempted one tourist, but it was a little too big, so she ambivalently left it behind in Saint Martin and sailed off to Anguilla. Two days later she reconsidered and caught the ferry back to take another look. The size still bothered her, and so she went on to another store, thinking it over. Two hours later she decided what the hell, returned to buy it, and found that someone else had snapped it up.

The truth can be stranger than fiction. Our friend fell in love with a daringly low-cut Ungaro original which Filene's Basement had marked down from $3,000 to only $500. She took it home but spent ten days shopping in vain for an appropriate undergarment. Every bra showed above the décolletage. The dress was no bargain, even at a sixth of its original price, if she couldn't wear it outside the house. Back it went to the Basement.

Two months later, when the WonderBra appeared, she thought of the dress and brooded—if only she had waited to take it back. Six months later she was back in the Basement, and there it was again, the very same Ungaro. She took it home; it was perfect with her WonderBra. She wore it to opening night at the opera, the exception to the rule. Some purchases are meant to be. □



"I'm worried—the FDA has recalled everything."

Social Autopsies

DIGBY ANDERSON

THERE is a whole host of sayings to the effect that traveling in hope is better than arriving and that the anticipation of pleasure is more enjoyable than the event itself. But what about the pleasure *after* the event—the regrets, the raking over of the coals, the recriminations. Cookery writers religiously talk of the dinner party at home in two parts, the preparation and the dinner itself. But dinner parties are like Caesar's Gaul. What about the autopsy? That, for many hosts, is the best fun of all. As soon as the front door shuts on the last guest, hostess throws another log on the fire, host pulls the cork on another bottle of claret, and the show is under way:

"What on earth was the matter with George?"

"You noticed too?"

"One couldn't help it. He said next to nothing, hardly ate anything, and drank—did you see what he drank?"

"About a glass all evening."

"If that. George, of all people! He's usually good for two bottles."

"But did you notice Susan? She ignored him all evening, chattered away, and scarcely looked at him."

The rules of the game for a really good postmortem are clear. Host and hostess have to speculate about what was wrong with George using only data from the evening itself. How was George when he arrived? If he was all right then, what happened subsequently? He was chatting to Henry before dinner, and Henry was going on about the reorganization at the office. Could it have been . . . ?

For sophisticated players, there is a more advanced version. In this you allow guests to leave at different times, or indeed contrive it. Thus when George, Susan, Dick, and Janie have departed, the six left can work on the George puzzle. Then Michael and Ann leave, so Henry can say:

"Look, I couldn't say this while she was still here, but I wouldn't take too seriously what Ann was saying about George. I don't know if you heard what Michael . . ."

Now since the speculation about George has been built on Ann's observation, and that is now in question, there is both Ann's reliability to be sorted out—bluntly, Henry thinks she was drunk, but no one saw her drinking much—and the whole edifice of inquiry about George to be rebuilt.

So round two is off to a good start. The finale is when only host and hostess are left. But even this is not the end. If George and the others are part of the ghastly modern turn system—"We came to you for dinner last week. You must come to us. It's our turn"—then each evening's speculation is but part of a series. Obviously, in the series, data can be accepted from past evenings.

SERIOUS conservative cooks don't have much interest in this game. They have one of their own. They too go over the evening, but they are interested in what people did and did not eat, what they said about various dishes, what they said about their own food at home. You see, unserious, modern cooks are a continual source of fascination to serious conservative cooks: Why do they do the barmy things they do?

"Did you see Philip with the mutton? It was splendid. He must have eaten well over a pound. He piled through the Gorgonzola too. It was a pleasure to watch."

"I bet Mary doesn't feed him adequately at home. He always eats so much here."

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"I wonder why she is so mean. They're not short of money. They can certainly afford a generous leg of mutton."

"I think she's just an anti-food person—one of those people who don't really enjoy eating and are determined to stop others doing so. She's a squeamer too, one of the 'Can't' Brigade—'Kidneys? Sorry, I can't eat kidneys.' 'Eels? Oooh, I couldn't.'"

"Come on, dear, you know the rules. Where's your evidence?"

"All right. I was watching her with the mutton. She would cut a piece, then cut it up again and again, push it round the plate, raise it to her mouth, then lower it and say something in the conversation. And she buried half the mutton in the *sauce soubise*, which she also left, saying she couldn't eat onions at night. Something about indigestion. In fact I swear she actually said it, 'I can't eat onions.' What the hell do they mean 'can't' or 'couldn't,' as if some extraneous agency were stopping them? What they mean is that they won't."

"Perhaps the mutton wasn't up to standard?"

"You know it was, and everyone else ate fit to bust, except George, but then that's another question."

"Odd how mutton goes down so well. And always gets the same comments too—'When did I last have mutton? Where did you get it?' We must have told Tim in particular where we get it at least five times. Why doesn't he get some for himself? Is it pure laziness?"

"Because Helen won't let him. She was going on about it tonight, how he makes a mess in 'her' kitchen. They are odd, these modern women. Always going on about what a chore cooking is, then furious if anyone else does anything in 'their' kitchen."

"You don't like her?"

"I do, actually, but she infuriated me tonight. What's that thing conservatives always accused leftists of in the Cold War? False moral equivalence. You know: 'Maybe Stalin did kill a few kulaks, but didn't the U.S. kill Vietnamese?' Well, she was up to that tonight with the squid. There I'd been cleaning it, carefully pulling out the ink sacks, piercing them for the ink, then sieving the grit out of it and producing that wonderful squid dish, and she says, 'Mmm, I love squid, I always have it at Romano's on Charles Street.' We've been to Romano's, several times, unfortunately, and the only squid he ever does is fried, and what he uses are those ghastly rings, prebattered and frozen. Just because he throws chopped parsley on them and serves them on rice he has stained yellow, she thinks they are great and fit to be compared to my *en su tinta*."

On goes the conversation about the food and the guests, and down goes the wine. Suddenly so much talk of good food has the inevitable effect.

"You know, old thing, there's a little squid left, and the fire's still glowing. Do you fancy a plate while we finish the red?" □

Gliding over Maui

THOMAS L. RHODES

HALEAKALA last erupted in 1790. At 9,800 feet it provides a wonderful view of Kahoolawe, Molokini, Molokai, Hawaii, and Lanai, as well as its own island, Maui. You can't see the Four Seasons Hotel from where we are, but you know roughly how to get there as the crow flies.

That emphatically is not the way the road goes: it is a narrow and winding path down the mountain and through Maui's up-country, and it will take my wife, Gleaves, and her sister, Jeannie, about an hour and a half to get back to the Wailea beaches that way. I, however, have chosen the 35-minute roadless means called hang-gliding.

It was purely by chance that I found myself making like a rather better-equipped Icarus. One day as we were sitting on the beach one of our party saw a glider-built-for-two coming down. It landed, as gracefully as a swan returning to a lake surface, not twenty yards from us. We rushed to the spot and met the flier as he emerged from under the machine. He took off his helmet and smiled from ear to ear, exuding elation, but more importantly confidence and competence. My wife turned to me and said, "You're gonna do it, aren't you?"

I said, "Yes, but how did you know?"

"It's just that look in your eyes," said she.

The flier proved to be a 35-year-old German named Armin Egert. He had come to Hawaii via Sri Lanka, where he had run a diving school, and Miami, where he had run another diving school. "They don't have mountains in Miami," he explained, "and so I came to Maui—the best of all worlds."

On New Year's Day the phone rang at 6:30 A.M., and Armin announced that it was a perfect day for flying: winds of 17 to 20 mph and blue skies. We gobbled our breakfast and headed for the rendezvous point, where Armin met us with his station wagon, the glider strapped to the roof. It was an hour-long drive up the switchback road to the top. On the way Armin told us how he had discovered hang-gliding at the age of 12 (the sport was dangerous back then, he said), and that during his stint in the German army he had received training as an accountant and a nurse (the latter might come in handy, I thought). He gave only one bit of technical instruction in advance: "Stand behind me to my left, reach over my back with your right hand and grab the red handle, and grab the orange handle with your left hand. I'll say, Ready? and when you say, Yes, you are committed. I say, one, two, three, and we run. Don't do like a big guy did to me once and change your mind *after* we start to run."

AT THE top the temperature is about 40 degrees. We quickly set up the glider and move it into position, looking out over a 45-degree drop. The barren lava field extends several thousand feet before you reach the tree line.

While Gleaves dutifully holds the glider's nose, we lie down under the wings to hook up the harness. Then Armin says, "Now stand up." Well, given the harness, the wires, and my position, to say nothing of my age, this is not easy. "Jah," says Armin sympa-

Mr. Rhodes is NR's president.

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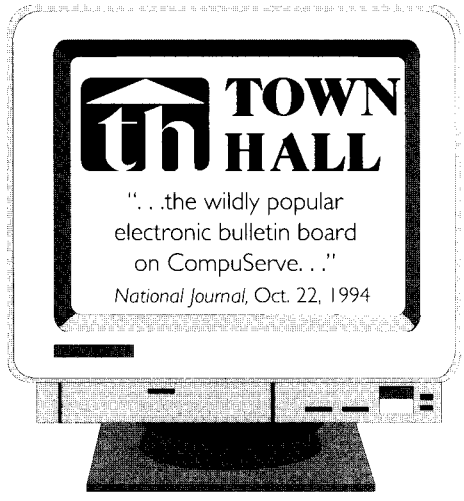

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thetically, "this is the hardest part." I wonder briefly what the hell I will do if I stand up before Armin is ready, Gleaves lets go of the nose, and I take off on my own. But Gleaves always tells me not to worry, so I don't.

Then I am up, and Armin asks, "Ready?"

I yell into the wind, "Yes!" Gleaves lets go of the nose and says, "God bless you both." Armin counts to three and we start to run. We run just two paces—our third step is in the air. At precisely the same instant we both yell, "Yahoo!" and our cruise has begun.

It's roughly 12 miles in horizontal distance to the hotel, with a vertical drop of almost ten thousand feet. The temperature will rise by about 40 degrees in the course of our descent—soon, I won't need my gloves.

Hackneyed though it seems, it really is just like being a bird—a soaring bird, like a seagull or a hawk. Two minutes into the flight, I know it isn't going to be long enough; I will have to do this again.

Armin explained during the drive that a glider stalls if there is not enough wind flowing over the surface of the wing. Now I ask him if we can try it. "Sure," he says. "Piece of cake." He raises the glider's nose; it stalls. He drops the nose again, and we pick up speed and recover. It feels like the swoop and rise of a roller-coaster. I ask what would happen if we hit a cloud, so he obligingly steers the glider over to a group of them and we cut through the edges. He has me take the controls for a few minutes, but mostly I am content this first time to let him do the flying while I watch the scenery—marvelous views of mountain, high plain, distant sugar cane and pineapple fields, big surf on the Western Shore, and beaches. Jeannie will tell me later, "As you got ready, I was glad it was you and not me. As soon as you were airborne I was jealous."

Now we're approaching the coast, hopeful that my daughters and son-in-law will be on the beach for our landing. Hitting an exact landing spot isn't a certainty, but with Armin's ability and a little luck we ought to make it.

Armin warns that we will come in fast and I think of something else he said on the drive up: "The air is your friend; it's the ground that can hurt you." The beach zooms up, I can see the kids, and Armin picks up the nose to stall the glider. We slow dramatically and land as smoothly as Armin did the first time we saw him.

Armin needed his accounting skill to record my fee, but thankfully neither of us needed his nursing skills. □

Raspberry Vinegar with Everything

LINDA BRIDGES

MESQUITE-GRILLED chicken with ginger and balsamic vinegar . . . Stir-fried pork on a bed of puréed spring vegetables, with peanut oil and cumin . . . Cajun blackened swordfish with a coulis of raspberries . . . Mesclun salad with Dijon honey vinaigrette . . .

From sea to shining sea you meet them, the fresh, innovative menus that wind up indistinguishable, not only from one restaurant to the next but from one region to the next. I knew we were in for a long siege when I sat down at a restaurant in Chatham, a *very* traditional village on the elbow of Cape Cod, and was handed a menu on which there was not one thing that didn't come out of the blackened ginger vinaigrette school.

Food trends we have had always with us—and the old ones had their bleak spots too. Regular diners-out in New York twenty years ago got awfully tired of the standard menu repeated, with only minor variations, at one mid-priced French restaurant after another: *moules marinière*, duckling *à l'orange* or with cherries, grilled salmon, *entrecôte*, frogs' legs. (At one present-day French bistro hereabouts, Les Halles, there is a poster of a man in chef's hat and coat, but with bare legs, over the caption: "The only frog's legs here are mine.") As good as each of those dishes is when honestly prepared, one longed for a bit of variety. And going back a few years beyond that, even a great *velouté* is rather heavy; too often it was far from great, and *poulet à l'ivoire* came out as chicken in library paste (a style still to be found embalmed at some of the old-school clubs).

Today's trend seems to have been fueled by the simultaneous rise of nationwide communications and the celebrity chef. Thirty years ago there were of course, restaurants that were known nationally and indeed internationally, but it was the *restaurants* that were known and not, except to the cognoscenti, the chefs. To be sure, a handful of great chef–proprietors made the two the same (Troisgros, Paul Bocuse); but how many people who ate at Lasserre, Tour d'Argent, or 21 knew who wore the white toque?

The change came in the Seventies with a new generation of food writers who—in laudable reaction to the growth of nationwide masscult fast food, and less laudable reaction to an old-fashioned formality—started promoting some up-and-coming chefs as the exponents of a new, elevated American regional cooking. Alice Waters, Paul Prudhomme, Larry Forgione, all of a sudden were stars, not only to those who had visited their restaurants, but to a vast reading and televiewing audience. And people with far less talent and training started to imitate them.

As food trends have been always with us, so great chefs have always had imitators: Escoffier is in some sense responsible for the Princeton Club's *poulet à la pâte de bibliothèque*. But even to try to cook *à l'*Escoffier requires a certain amount of discipline. Those long-cooking sauce bases aren't difficult, exactly, but any recipe that reads, "Now remove the beef and continue to simmer for another 10 hours, skimming regularly," is going to put off the casual experimenter. Whereas beds of puréed carrot sound simple in the age of the food processor, and if raspberry vinegar goes beautifully with calf's liver, why wouldn't it go with codfish?

Alas, for the diner, avoiding disap-

Miss Bridges is NR*'s managing editor.*

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pointments isn't as easy as avoiding restaurants that use ginger or tomato coulis. In the first place, there aren't many outposts of *haute bourgeoise* cooking left. The lovely Les Pléiades in New York—with its lobster bisque and Billi-Bi, its frogs' legs *à la provençale* and Dover sole *sauce moutarde*—closed up a few years ago, its space taken over by the brilliant, but undeniably nouvelle-cuisine, Daniel Boulud. Now I have to go (no hardship, but a bit out of the way) to the Isle de France in Stowe, Vermont, for some of those dishes, served with a similar level of formality.

In the second place, most of the debased dishes have a noble cousin somewhere, and I've found no infallible way of telling t'other from which by looking at the menu. For every hundred composed salads made of overcooked chicken on flavorless lettuce with a too-sweet dressing, there is the roasted quail on mixed greens or the warm-smoked salmon and grilled potatoes on red-leaf lettuce done by Neil Baxter at Rundles in Stratford, Ontario. For every hundred cloying medallions of veal with cherry preserves, there is the lamb shank with dried fruit of Jean-Michel Diot at the Park Bistro in Manhattan. And for every hundred pieces of chicken or fish doused with raspberry vinegar there is the *foie gras de canard* with raspberry vinegar and turnip *confit* at the Perle du Lac in Geneva.

Please excuse me a minute while I take another bit of my penne salad with goat cheese and sun-dried tomatoes. □

Why I Gamble

DANIEL SELIGMAN

THIS article is driving me crazy. First, it is sinking in, after several days of staring at the headline above, that the issues it raises are more complex than posited when I accepted the assignment. Second, the passage of those several days has created a certain tension between two cherished goals: 1) assured manuscript delivery by vouchsafed deadline date and 2) unstinting participation in this month's poker game, only two days off as I write.

Furthermore, I start out knowing that no matter what story line I come up with, a significant fraction of *NR* readers will unbudgingly go on thinking that gambling is bad. Several years ago, I was called by an investment-banker friend who asked if I would mind having lunch with her and a client—a conservative intellectual who

Mr. Seligman is a columnist for Fortune *and the author of* A Question of Intelligence *(Citadel Press).*

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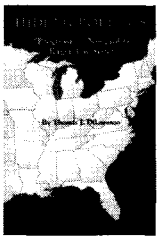

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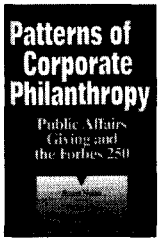

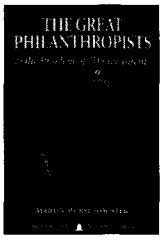

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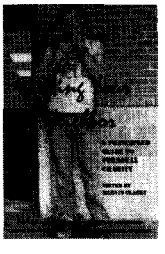

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happened to run a steel company, was said to admire my *Fortune* column, and shared my hard-line perspective on numerous issues of the day. Feeling flattered, I accepted and, until the very end of our meeting, felt I had come to know a kindred spirit. But as we were leaving La Côte Basque, my newfound friend asked a bit diffidently about the numerous references in the column to casinos and race tracks. Was it really true, he asked, that I hung around such places? I said it was, and he said, "Oh," looking embarrassed. Social conservatives tend to see gambling as a big negative on the values scorecard. Intellectuals feel it betokens a want of seriousness. Economists of every persuasion go around arguing that it is "unproductive"—that, in the words of Paul Samuelson, "it involves simple *sterile transfers of money or goods* between individuals creating no new money or goods." The italics are Paul's, as is the familiar refusal to accept that gambling is terrific entertainment.

Gambling has been a major theme in my life since approximately age twenty, and I seem to have come by the habit honestly. My father was a heavy sports bettor for much of his life, and my mother was eternally loving and attentive—precisely the kind of mother who, according to Freud, leaves men feeling forever lucky as they march through life. Anybody wishing to observe several score characters radiating this state of grace in unison has only to board the 8 P.M. flight from Los Angeles to Las Vegas. The atmosphere features loud hoots and unconstrained hilarity. The 1:45 A.M. flight back is much more subdued; to be sure, the guys have had a long day.

THERE are several things to be said for gambling, the first of which is: You really might win. Furthermore, you might win big. In fact, you almost certainly will win big if you hang in there and structure your bets properly. Here I am sidling up to one of my two theoretical contributions to the economics of gambling: the counterintuitive view of long-shot betting as a form of saving.

The saving process, as we all know, involves the conversion of a stream of income into a lump of capital. A man who takes $100 out of his weekly paycheck and puts it under his mattress might get criticized for failing to maximize investment returns, but no economist would deny that the $5,200 he had accumulated after a year was the result of saving.

Now imagine another chap—one who also wishes to convert $100 a week into $5,200 but feels he is entitled to a few kicks along the way. Since he luckily lives in downtown Las Vegas, it is convenient for him to visit Binion's Horseshoe casino once a week. His plan on these visits is to throw $100 on the table each time, hoping eventually to get lucky and win something like $5,200. Unfortunately, no casinos offer 51 to 1 bets to low rollers, but there are a number of casino games in which you get huge long-shot payoffs by winning five or six times in a row and letting your profits ride. If you know what you are doing and elect to play blackjack with a single deck (possible at Binion's but hard to find on the Strip), you are essentially in a fair game, i.e., the house edge is minimal (and the casino depends for its profits on the inept). So if you sit down at the $100 table and win six hands in a row, you will leave the table with something like $6,400. The chance of winning an even-money bet six times in a row is only 1.56 per cent, but the chance of winning *one such bet* in 52 weekly visits is 56 per cent. So you are favored to win at least once a year, and if you do so, your lump will be substantially larger than that of our mattress man.

It is possible to imagine various real-world problems arising out of this approach to nest-egg building, but the basic conception is rock solid. If you repetitively play a fair game, and structure your bets so as to generate frequent losses and occasional big wins, then you are converting income into capital. Indeed you are doing that even if the game is not quite fair. If your weekly savings budget was getting tossed on the craps table instead of the blackjack table, you would possibly be fighting a house edge of 0.6 per cent, but you would still be favored (53 per cent this time) to convert $100 into $6,400 at least once a year.

My own preferred and most successful form of saving has featured ninth-race triples, also known as trifectas, at New York's Aqueduct and Belmont racetracks. A triple is a long-shot bet, requiring one to pick the first three horses to cross the finish line, in order. If you buy a triple "box," which consists of six bets featuring all combinations of your three horses, you don't have to worry about the order. A triple box costs $12, and my standard bet is four or five boxes, all on horses selected randomly by a BASIC program lovingly conceived for this purpose alone. (It prompts you for the number of horses in the race, the program numbers of any scratches, and the number of boxes you wish to buy, then spits out your selections.) If 12 steeds are running, a bettor with five boxes going has a 2.3 per cent chance of hitting a triple, and if he plays this game once a week, he has a 70 per cent chance of hitting at least once a year, and over the years he has a serious expectation of latching onto some sizable payoffs. Since 1986, when I first began putting the results of my gambling into a spreadsheet, I have had around 300 betting days that featured triples, of which only a handful were winners. But these included payoffs of $14,611, $11,225, $9,644, $3,794, and $3,394. And even though New York racetracks have a horrifying edge of 25 per cent on triple bets—i.e., payments to winners represent only about 75 per cent of the money bet—the spreadsheet shows me way ahead of the game. So it is fairly easy to view the recurrent losses of $48 or $60 as deposits into a savings account.

POSSIBLY you are wondering about my other contribution to economic theory. It was built on an insight gleaned from our monthly poker game. This began in 1953 as a low-stakes limit game but soon upgraded itself to table stakes (in which a player can bet any amount up to the total of chits and chips he had in front of him when the deal started). The greybeards still in the game know there is a possibility of winning or losing as much as $1,000 in an evening, but a more likely outcome is a swing under $500. An interesting thing about those figures is that they were far larger back in the Fifties, when we were all much poorer. It was then common to win or lose over $2,500 in one session—around $14,000 in today's prices. Whatever else it was doing, the game in those years clearly served as the great monthly adventure in our lives, one that was doubly wonderful in that, unlike Antarctic exploration or rappelling in the Rockies, it came with no physical risks or material discomfort. In those days, we tended to play all night, drink quite a lot while doing so,

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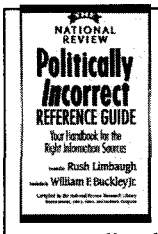

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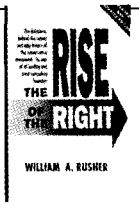

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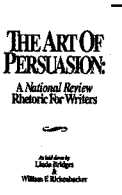

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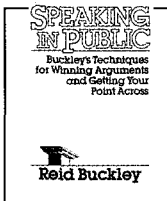

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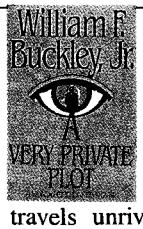

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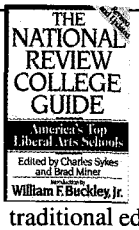
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then go out for breakfast before wandering off to a barber and the office. Once, in 1958, I personally managed to lose $1,600—at a time when my annual salary was $16,000, I had no savings to speak of, and I was the sole support of a family of four. Breakfasting with the gang at a Lexington Avenue coffee shop, I did my best to feign insouciance over the night's results, but the refrain that kept rattling in my head was: How in hell do I get out of this mess?

The answer, revealed to me in the ensuing months, is at the heart of my theoretical contribution, which states: Gambling has a positive effect on economic activity. A significant fraction of the winners will regard their loot as "found money" and rush to spend it, and quite a few of the losers will feel an instant, urgent need to augment earnings, which in my case meant toiling mightily in the freelance market. Please do not draw any inferences from the fact that I am still so toiling.

About the problem mentioned in the first paragraph: The guys instantly agreed to postpone the March game. To be sure, they are getting old. □

Sexual Athleticism

ANDREW FERGUSON

WHEN the editors of NATIONAL REVIEW asked me to write an article on the subject of "sexual athleticism," my first reaction, spoken sotto voce, was: "Of course. It had to be me. But how on earth did they know?"

Had they spoken to my wife? Canvassed the sisters from Sigma Chi at Occidental College circa 1977? Or measured the wide swath of scorched earth that I had cut in the intervening years, through various toney nightclubs, graduate schools, and places of employment?

Indeed, the only pressing questions, by my lights, were two: What had taken America's editors so long to ask my secrets? And why was it NATIONAL REVIEW—an intellectual magazine—that was asking me for such an article, and not, say, *Sports Illustrated*, or, what amounts to the same thing, *Jugs*? Or better yet, *Modern Bride*?

I'm laying it on a bit thick, I know. But I thought it might be instructive, in the opening paragraphs of this little homily, to assume the persona of the true sexual athlete. Whether I myself am endowed with such powers is none of your business (I am too!), but the sexual athlete designs his social interactions in such a way that the question becomes everyone's business. Sexual athleticism is not so much a matter of one's actual performance as of comment on one's performance—less a matter of doing it, in other words, than of talking about doing it. This makes it a perfectly Nineties pleasure, since, in the present day, only talking about something validates it, makes it seem real; for many of us the purely private doesn't exist until it is made public, preferably on *Sally Jessy Rafael*, after which, of course, it is no longer purely private. Or private at all.

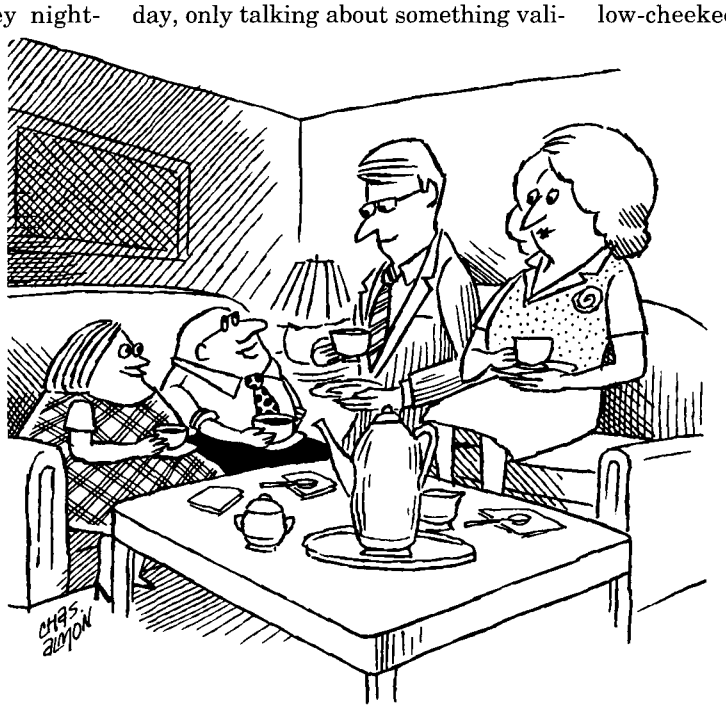
If you follow me. My point is that sexual athleticism is almost a self-canceling phrase, like the term "a highly respected lawyer." What's the point of hiring a highly respected lawyer? "A hit man with the very highest standards of personal hygiene." Why? Athleticism is a public matter; sex, as originally conceived (so to speak), is a private matter. When the two are combined—when showmanship overtakes something whose essence is discretion, subtlety, the whisper not the shout, the shimmy instead of the strut—a certain kind of dissonance is likely to result, a certain kind of falseness. When sexual pleasure goes public, I mean, the pleasure just goes.

For a case in point, you can look almost anywhere in our sex-saturated pop culture. The aforementioned Sally Jessy, for example—bespectacled like a prof, with the soul of a white slaver. When the sullen truants who are her guests take the stage, slumping in canvas chairs and sweating under the arc lights, they invariably unburden themselves of a complaint that can be tied to sexual athleticism—that is, to the vigorous pursuit and execution of the sex act. See the young fellow center stage, skinny and unshaven and hollow-cheeked, baseball cap backwards, disappearing into his baggy Megadeath T-shirt. To his left sits a girl who could be cast as the lead in Fox TV's *The Paula Corbin Jones Story*. To his right sits another, much, much plumper version, with giant red hair whipped up by a cotton-candy machine. And the colloquy proceeds, punctuated by war whoops from the scholars in the audience.

GIRL A: But then we went to bed, and it was just, like, I don't know how to describe it . . .

BOY (*smirks*).

GIRL B: And he said he was only doing it with me because he could never do it with another girl because he loved me.



"And then we got married and settled down."

Mr. Ferguson is a senior writer for The Washingtonian.

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GIRL A: He loved *me*! The way he made me feel when he . . .

BOY (*rolls eyes, tries unsuccessfully to sit upright*).

GIRL B: So I went to see him and I knew she was in there because I could see the trailer rockin' back and forth . . .

SALLY JESSY: Now let me see if I've got this straight. You three are cousins?

With all due respect for the sanctity of sex, and without violating the axiom that no third party can plumb the depths of two people's private relationship, we must ask: Who do they think they're fooling? The juvenile delinquent looks as if a fifty-yard dash would cripple him; Girl B is built to dimensions that would render the conventional sex act mechanically impossible; and Girl A couldn't keep her mouth shut long enough to engage in anything demanding even the slightest degree of intimacy. Yet their sex lives would, by their public confessions, seem to require the athleticism of Nadia Comaneci and a sober Lawrence Taylor. Excuse me, but I don't believe it.

WHAT we have here is the sexual equivalent of a copycat crime. Thanks to the exhortations of popular culture, many of our fellow Americans have come to see sexual athleticism as the only kind of sex worth having. The messages are unending and unmistakable. I take the recent Madonna movie, *Body of Evidence*, as emblematic. Our national chanteuse plays a siren wrongly accused of murder, and to break the ice between her and her attorney she limns her philosophy of sex. "Did you ever see animals make love, Frank?" she purrs, heavy-lidded. "It's intense. It's violent. But they never really hurt each other."

To which Frank makes the neo-Aristotelian reply: "We're not animals."

Madonna trumps him: "Yes, we are." She later belies her own thesis when she consummates their relationship by pouring hot wax all over Frank—a trick that few ocelots have mastered.

But her larger point remains. This, alas, is what sex has come to. The mandate has been handed down. Dazzled by the impossible ideal of sexual athleticism, Americans are now expected to take their cue from the rutting commotion of the monkey house. Madonna says so, and she should know. □

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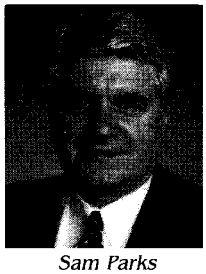

Sam Parks

I am acquainted with several of the financial institutions that have financed this gold rush and I know that they are speculating- more on the fundamentals of the individual mining stocks– and less on an increase in the price of gold. However, if gold does go to $450 or $500 per ounce, as I believe it will, the individual stocks should perform even better.

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Trains I Have Known And Loved

ALISTAIR McALPINE

TWENTY years ago, if you lived in Europe you might have taken the view that the railway train would be extinct by the end of this century. Now, five years from the millennium, the train is going from strength to strength. What on earth has happened to bring about this change of attitude toward travel?

The motorways of Europe are, as often as not, one long traffic jam. Airports have become little more than giant supermarkets, and the time spent waiting in line grows longer by the year. A year ago there would have been no argument that the most comfortable and efficient way to travel from London to Paris was by airplane; train, ferry, and then the train again were cumbersome and slow. Now, thanks to the Chunnel, you just hop on a train at the Waterloo Terminal and sit in a reclining chair while hostesses serve you breakfast, lunch, or dinner and offer you drinks and newspapers. I do not care that this train races through France and dawdles through Kent. If you have to dawdle anywhere, Kent—with its oast houses, well-kept farms, and country mansions—is the place to do it. The Waterloo Terminal, by the way, is a masterpiece of architecture in the manner of the great British railway stations of the nineteenth century, but conceived in the late-twentieth-century idiom. This building is so good that it is worth a visit even if you have no intention of traveling on a train.

The ethos of past travels has even been revived. The Royal Scotsman will take you lazily through Scotland's Highlands. The cabins are immensely comfortable, the food delicious, and there is sure to be a stop at a distillery or two to sample the region's produce. The Venice Simplon Orient Express will take you from London to Venice in similar comfort. In fact there has been an outbreak of luxury trains, and that outbreak is not confined to Europe: the Orient Express has a cousin that takes you through paddyfields and jungle, from Singapore to Bangkok; it is the epitome of comfort. Even in Colorado I found a train that chuffs its way through the Rockies.

This luxurious travel is all very well for those with time and money to spend, but how luxurious are the normal railway systems of Europe? At their best they compete favorably with the airlines (although I must in fairness point out that I have been robbed on a train standing in Milan's Central Station but never had this experience on a plane waiting to take off from Milan's Linate Airport). Take the *Pendalino*, for instance, an express train from Venice to Rome, stopping at Bologna and Florence; it takes about four hours. The seats recline and are spaciously deployed, the staff serve airline meals and offer magazines. It is the view, however, that makes traveling on this route the winner every time, for the scenery is stunning.

ANOTHER great advantage trains have over planes is that you can change your mind. Pull into a station that you like the look of, and just as quickly as you can make up your mind, you are standing alone on the platform in a town that you had no intention of visiting, off on a great adventure. Just imagine flying over Bologna and fancying a plate of spaghetti bolognese! But from the train, nothing is easier than to get off at that city built in red brick where arcades edge the streets and provide shelter from both sun and rain. Once the home of the Renaissance sculptor Jan de Bologna, the town has many of his works and plenty else to see besides. Bologna's food is the best in Italy, and that alone should seduce you from the comfort of your train.

Traveling by train can be as luxurious as you make it. Take the train from Paris to Venice. The overnight sleeper leaves at 8:30 P.M. and arrives at about 8:30 A.M. Ignore all invitations to dine in restaurant cars or buffets and go instead that afternoon to Fauchon and acquire a picnic. Every visitor to Paris should visit Fauchon just to look at the staggering array of food. The chance for a visitor to buy some of it does not come often, for the grander hotels take it very badly if you picnic in their bedrooms. Not so the French railways. They are only too happy for you to have the most comprehensive of picnics in your sleeping compartment. Several wines and champagne, Fauchon's *foie gras*, stuffed partridge in season or quail out of it, chicken or beef, ham boiled or smoked, salmon smoked and rolled or freshly boiled and decorated with aspic. I enjoyed a slice or two of Fauchon's game pie when last I made this trip.

For true luxury take two compartments that communicate, one for eating in, the other for sleeping in. I remember traveling to France as a boy in the late Forties, when stationmasters attended upon important travelers dressed in a top hat and black tailcoat, when trains were loaded onto ferries that carried them across the Channel, and when ladies' trunks weighed several hundred pounds. We were returning from a holiday in Switzerland, and friends there, believing Britain to be starving—and they were right, for the Britain of the late Forties suffered from both socialism and food rationing—had given us an enormous hamper of food. My mother set about arranging this feast in one cabin while my father settled himself in the next cabin.

The train was about to leave the station of Basle when the porter who had carried the luggage, a vast quantity of it, appeared with outstretched palm. My father, believing the French to suffer as we British suffered, gave the man a hard-boiled egg, a gift beyond price in Britain. The porter pocketed the egg and passed into my mother's compartment and out into the corridor. In moments he was back with my father, palm outstretched, and received another egg. This was repeated again and then again.

My mother, noticing what was going on, suggested that my father give the man some currency. In those days the

Alistair McAlpine, a columnist for the European *and the* Spectator, *is the author of* Letters to a Young Politician.

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British £5 note was the size of a pocket handkerchief and printed on thin white paper. My father's pockets were always a muddle; what is more, he was extremely short-sighted. Pulling what he believed to be a fiver from his pocket, he gave it to the porter. The train left the station; we ate our picnic and prepared for bed. My father asked my mother what she had done with his broken false teeth. She replied that she had wrapped them in tissue paper and put the package in his pocket. Somewhere on the French railway system there is an aged porter who has never understood why a wealthy Englishman gave him four hard-boiled eggs and a pair of broken false teeth.

I can so vividly recall those early trips on trains across Europe. The first time I was taken to the Côte d'Azur I was five. I awoke early in the morning to pull up the blinds of my compartment and saw red earth and cacti. To find that I was on the moon could have been no more exciting or indeed strange for a young boy who had not left England before.

A MONTH or so ago I traveled from Rome to Nice by the night sleeper. I first made this journey 35 years ago, in the other direction. I was curious to see how things had changed. The sleeping-car attendants are still as attentive as they always were. Now there are virtually no porters, but I travel with virtually no luggage. The landscape out of Rome, which was once ruins in the style of Piranesi, is now cluttered with tenements built during the boom years of the Seventies in no particular style at all. The outskirts of Nice, which used to be market gardens and small farms, now grow only vast concrete and marble apartment blocks. My sleeping compartment, however, could be the very one I traveled in then, clean and comfortable.

On my first trip I ate in the restaurant car, a severe place with wooden benches where thin leather pads passed for cushions and we ate spaghetti with ground horsemeat as sauce. This time I dined with the British ambassador at his residence in Rome before I set off and dined very well indeed, I may say. My journey passed without event, I had no great adventure, but once again I felt all the excitement I knew as a child when I traveled on trains. □

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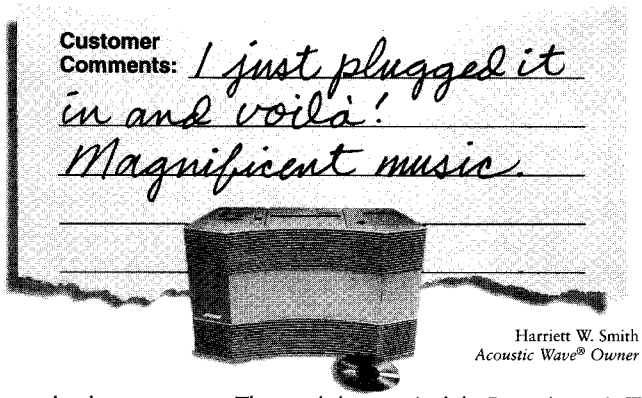

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After Mitterrand, the Deluge

GOOD-BYE TO LA GLOIRE

François Mitterrand tried to strengthen France by making her a second Germany, bound with the original in a United Europe. He has succeeded only in weakening her to the point of absurdity.

JOHN LAUGHLAND

WHY should anyone, least of all in the United States, be interested in France? It is understandable that American policy toward Europe now vacillates between a vague sense of dutiful attachment to Britain and a rather unattractive gamble on the inevitability of German domination. By contrast, France's leading role in the appeasement of Serbia, her anti-American posturing in everything from commercial negotiations to relations with Iraq, and her curiously antiquated political and economic structures seem to make her as irrelevant as she is absurd.

Like many questions, this one reveals much in being asked. People would not wonder if France still counted, were policy-making all over the world not infected by a rampant economism that equates economic strength with political importance. Communism was the materialist vision *par excellence*, but its apparent collapse has not been accompanied by a decline in similar presuppositions in the West.

France holds the key to Europe's future because she lies at Europe's geopolitical center. It is she, not Germany or Britain, that is the principal stabilizer in European politics. In area, she is the largest country in Europe after Russia. She is the only European country to be both maritime and continental—often a source of weakness in the past, as she has struggled and failed to maintain strength on both land and sea, but still an undoubted source of potential strength. Just as she links Germany to the Atlantic and to the Iberian peninsula and Great Britain, so she also links the North of Europe to the South, her coasts giving her a geopolitical interest in Scandinavia as much as in Turkey and the Maghreb. This nodality is reflected in her extreme ethnic heterogeneity. France, which unites Flemings, Germans, and Celts with Latins on the borders of Italy and Spain, is a unique microcosm of Europe itself. Her decisions and personality affect the entire continent.

However, France can realize her potential only if she thinks of herself in such political terms. All the signs are that, like the rest of the world, she does not. The principal legacy of François Mitterrand's 14 years in power is a devotion to his vision of European integration on the part of all France's major politicians: each of the three leading candidates in the presidential election (of which the first round will be held April 23) has vowed to continue along the lines Mitterrand has laid down. This is not merely because the president has managed to delineate the new confines of political respectability for his own ends—no small achievement in a country where popular Euroskepticism is as strong as in Britain or Denmark. It is rather because, in France's domestic as much as in her foreign affairs, the very concept of politics has almost disappeared.

Mitterrand's view of politics is the opposite of de Gaulle's. Inasmuch as *le Général* genuinely incarnated the preference for the nation-state over European supranationalism (and there are important caveats on this head), it was because he believed that, being economically and demographically weaker than Germany, France had no choice but to be more intelligent. Gaullism thus had a feminine quality to it, for it tried to exploit weakness and turn it into strength. De Gaulle's definitive appeal of June 18, 1940, and his subsequent and ultimately successful insistence that France be recognized as one of the Four Powers, were undertaken against all the odds. His politics was truly the art of the possible.

The Science of the Necessary

MITTERRAND, by contrast, seems to treat politics as the science of the necessary. His reign has fostered precisely the economistic and bureaucratico-dirigiste vision of politics whose inevitable consequence is the preference of the European idea over the national one, because the former assumes that all politics is dictated by economics, and that the possibility of free decision-making is destabilizing and dangerous. The inevitable consequence of this blindness to the possibilities of politics is submission to the so-called necessities of economics.

In concrete terms, this has meant the end of the affirmation of French specificity, and its replacement by the contrary view that France must become more like Germany in order to be able to compete with her. The independence of the Bank of France; the relentless pursuit of a "strong franc"; the policy of "decentralizing" power to

Mr. Laughland's book, The Death of Politics: France under Mitterrand, *is published by Michael Joseph in London.*

ILLUSTRATION BY KONSTANTIN VALOV

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France's regions; the narrowing of France's former world view into a foreign policy which, like Germany's, is exclusively European; the rise of a Green Party in France—all these are signs of France's willful self-Germanization under Mitterrand.

Imitation is the sincerest form of self-abasement. In general, France's attempts to become as strong as Germany, and on the same terms, have only entrenched French weakness. That France's (and Europe's) biggest bank, Crédit Lyonnais, could, over a period of years, secretly run up losses twenty times greater than those of Barings, shows more than the extreme clubbiness that unites France's government, her monetary and banking control authorities, and the state enterprises themselves. Crédit Lyonnais's mad program of buying massive shareholdings in private companies was inspired precisely by a desire, supported by the political establishment, to become like a German bank.

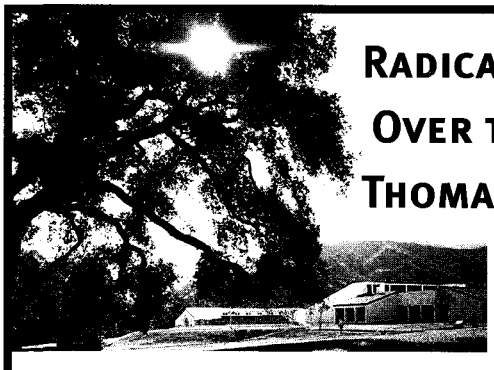
Similarly, the policy of the strong franc has caused France to pay the price, in terms of high interest rates, of having her currency aligned to a reserve currency, the Deutsche Mark, without reaping any of the benefits of having a reserve currency herself. Meanwhile, if France's rigid labor market was already notoriously incapable of net job creation even in times of economic growth, the monetary regime imported from Germany affects French youth unemployment disproportionately because, in contrast to Germany, France has a healthy demographic growth rate and therefore simply more young people who are potential victims of unemployment.

Mitterrand's reversal of de Gaulle's foreign policy is also reflected in the changes he has made to France's internal political structure. While de Gaulle designed a constitution which was the incarnation of that capacity to say yes or no which is the definitive characteristic of a sovereign state, Mitterrand has devoted his reign to destroying it from within. The French president is incomparable among Western politicians in the huge powers he enjoys; he exercises near-total control of parliament, including the power to dissolve it. This allows him to rule without any significant parliamentary or public control except for a plebiscite once every seven years.

Under de Gaulle, these sweeping powers were justifiable because he took responsibility for the actions of the governments he had appointed. But the constitution provides for no mechanism to enforce such responsibility. Mitterrand has tended to treat his governments as little more than fuses between himself and popular sanction. Whenever faced with the failure of policies which he had instructed the government to conduct through parliament, he tended merely to dispose of his prime minister, *pour encourager les autres*, and to press on, rather like a snake shedding its skin. Moreover, when the Socialists lost general elections in 1986 and 1993, Mitterrand gave himself the right to stay in office, and even to augment his own power, by acting as a self-appointed counterbalance to the elected government, even though the spirit of the centralist constitution precludes this.

Political Stagnation

AS A result of wielding power with very little responsibility, Mitterrand has had a reign that is politically stagnant. Bureaucracy being the quintessence of power thus exercised, it is no surprise if the massive source of inertia which is the French administration has progressively consolidated its hegemony over the French political class and its thought processes ever since Mitterrand came to power in 1981. Political



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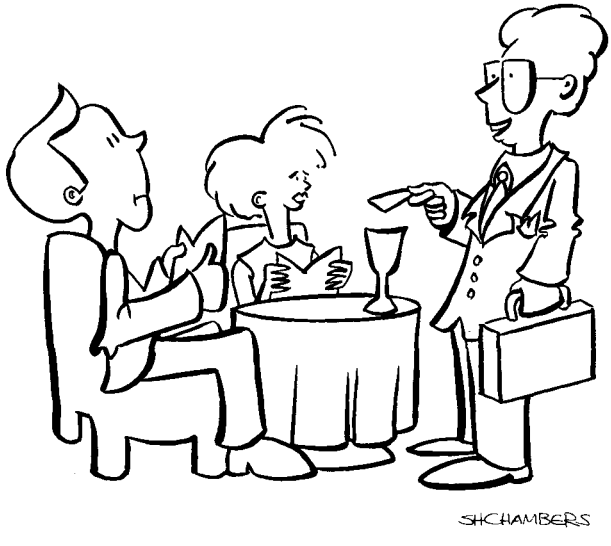
life in France is now dominated by ten or so super-barons, and they are all graduates of France's tiny elite administrative training college, the Ecole Nationale d'Administration, which produces a mere eighty graduates a year. Further, most of the country's leading industrialists are peas from the same pod, having in many cases spent their careers flitting from government to administration to industry, as if there were no differences among those three categories.

Apart from being notorious for appointing his close friends to powerful positions (the president's huge powers of patronage are not subject to any parliamentary approval), Mitterrand has also been determined to put so many limits around what his successors will be able to do that they will not be able to govern. That is, they will not be able to make true decisions about the future of their country but will instead merely administer decisions that are made elsewhere, especially by the European Union. A country whose internal decision-making processes have hemorrhaged into mere administration can, by definition, have no truly political existence on the international stage either. This is an especially novel state of affairs for France, for her nation-statehood is understood precisely as a political artifice affirmed against the amorphous and ethnically defined German Empire on her Eastern border.

Power tends to corrupt; absolute power can corrupt the whole of society. In France, the more powerful the office, the weaker the mechanisms of control over the man. It is therefore hardly surprising that Mitterrand has presided over an explosion of corruption scandals, most of which have concerned him personally. Whether it was the corrupt financing of the Socialist Party and of his own presidential campaigns (public construction contracts were awarded only after a fee was paid to a "consultant," which was in reality a slush fund)—or whether the scandals concerned his closest friends, such as Roger-Patrice Pelat, who made scores of millions in various insider-trading deals in which the president's hand was less than invisible (it turns out that Mitterrand himself, as well as his wife and son, had at various times received regular stipends from Pelat)—charges of malpractice are seldom pursued to their conclusion in France.

This is not least because the judicial process is regularly the object of political manipulation. Prosecutions are ordered, and can be stopped, by the minister of justice. Investigating magistrates depend for their promotion on the Superior Council of the Magistrature, of which the president is chairman and the minister is vice chairman, and the judges know that if they want a career, they had better not rock the boat. Trials thus follow a clear political pattern: now that the Right is in power, the former speaker of the National Assembly and current first secretary of the Socialist Party, Henri Emmanuelli, is standing trial for his role in the illicit financing of the Socialists. Meanwhile, similar investigations into illicit property deals concerning the right-wing parties—and especially the presidential candidate, Jacques Chirac, and Interior Minister Charles Pasqua—are being slowed down by the minister of justice, who hopes to retain a ministry in a future Chirac government. Similarly, the investigations into the Pelat affairs have been mysteriously blocked for over a year.



"I recommend a tort."

One of Mitterrand's most flagrant abuses of power was when his private presidential police force, set up in 1982, illegally tapped the telephones of judges, journalists, senior officials, Mitterrand's own advisors, and even his own prime minister. In total, there have been some five thousand taps. However, in a wide-ranging interview published last month, the president–prince had merely to say, "If there were abuses, I do not take responsibility for them," for the matter to end there.

Hazy Understanding

INDEED, this hypocritical invocation by Mitterrand of the (non-existent) independence of the judiciary is only one example of how the haze of unaccountability which hangs like an ether over French public life has anaesthetized the thought processes of the country's leading politicians and journalists. Thus, in a system where it is taken for granted that politicians may make personal use of funds and prerogatives granted to them in their official capacity, the minister of justice recently permitted the opening of an inquiry into the secret funding of his own party via a Swiss bank account, during the period when he was its president. What may come of the inquiry if he remains in power is anyone's guess: but it is striking that, just at the moment when a normal democratic constitution would consider that a politician's suspect extra-ministerial behavior might compromise his position, the French system allows him to invoke the distinction between a man and his office as a reason for not resigning!

The present campaign for the presidency only reinforces the impression that France's political class is brain dead. On European policy, all three main candidates—the Gaullist leader and mayor of Paris, Jacques Chirac; the right-of-center prime minister, Edouard Balladur; and the Socialist candidate, Lionel Jospin—are in complete agreement that European integration must be pursued. In Chirac's case, this is particularly striking, given that Gaullists are supposed to be hostile to European supranationalism. But Chirac's acquiescence in the European project runs very deep. Like his three rivals, he supports the introduction of a single currency, the strengthening of "political union," and an integrated European foreign and defense policy.

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(He is also, like Mitterrand and Gorbachev, in effect in favor of the reconstitution of the Soviet Union and the creation of a pan-European "political architecture" built on two pillars, the European Union and the "Commonwealth of Independent States.") In keeping with the general ignorance about the meaning of politics and statehood, all three rivals also incoherently imagine that their plans for European Union are compatible with the maintenance of national sovereignty, simply because the French president will sit at the top table.

Nor do any of the candidates seem to have the political will, or for that matter the political support, to conduct any serious reforms of the French economy. Like most European states, France is overtaxed and overgoverned. The Social Security system has a deficit of 50 billion francs and employs 180,000 people, but it would be political suicide to attack it or any other of the state measures that supposedly cushion French citizens from the vagaries of everyday life. On the contrary, as is invariably the case with French governments, the candidates are in hock to the most powerful pressure groups, France's opaque political system having failed to evolve a democratic mechanism for lobbies to make their case. In the run-up to the election, for instance, France has been hit by a wave of strikes in support of wage increases. Despite the country's extremely low inflation, and with no apparent increase in productivity in the sectors affected—which include the whole of public transport (the airlines, the railways, and the Parisian mass-transit system) as well as the administration and banks in Corsica and the auto industry—all three leading candidates expressed their "understanding" and support for the strikers wreaking havoc on their fellow countrymen.

Such conceptual fog affects the media, too. Most of it is state-controlled, with most of the press running on government subsidies and at the mercy of state-controlled advertising agencies. This is one reason there is little chance that France will undergo an Italian-style "clean hands" operation. Another is that there is little popular mandate for it: like Chantecler, the French entertain a perennial fear that the state might fall in at any moment, and believe that their only choice is between soft authoritarianism and anarchy. Under such conditions, the European dream is the perfect way out. Being a dream, it will conveniently distract France from her own internal problems and enable her to continue doing what she has done so well for 14 years now: sleepwalk. □

A Case of Questionable Statistics

LEAD HYPE

How many American children have lead poisoning? Not enough, apparently.

PETER SAMUEL

IN THE March 21 *New York Times*, veteran health reporter Jane Brody wrote that "new studies" suggest 3 million American pre-schoolers have dangerous levels of lead in their blood. This alarming factoid is just the latest example of how lead poisoning has been hyped by activists and the news media. The studies to which Miss Brody alluded do not exist.

The last study to measure the extent of lead poisoning was a survey of 13,000 Americans conducted by the Centers for Disease Control between 1988 and 1991. Reported on last July in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, the study found that 8.9 per cent of children between the ages of 1 and 5 had more than 10 micrograms of lead per deciliter of blood, the CDC's new threshold of concern. Applied to the population of 1-to-5-year-olds, this means that 1.7 million pre-schoolers have this level of lead, not 3 million.

The deputy head of the CDC's lead branch, David Forney, told me he had noticed the *New York Times* exaggeration; he confirmed that 1.7 million is the number his agency uses. He said there have been no new studies suggesting that the real number is 3 million. When I called Miss Brody to ask her where she got that figure, I heard a recorded voice complain about her lack of a secretary and her inability to take calls or respond to requests, questions, or comments. I left a message anyway, indicating my amazement at her claim. As of this writing, I have not received a response.

Miss Brody's 3-million number probably comes from an Environmental Defense Fund (EDF) document, "Legacy of Lead: America's Continuing Epidemic of Childhood Lead Poisoning: A Report and Proposal for Legislative Action." But since the EDF is one of Washington's premier scare-selling environmental groups, attributing the number to it would have damaged Miss Brody's credibility—especially since the EDF document is dated March 1990, hardly "new" even for the sleepiest of *Times* readers.

This sort of carelessness is quite common in the make-believe world of lead scares. The National Research Council's major 1993 report "measuring lead exposure in infants, children, and other sensitive populations" says 6 million children and 400,000 fetuses are "at risk," having lead levels in excess of 10 micrograms per deciliter of blood. The 337-page report has become a reference on lead poisoning for reporters, health officials, politicians, and "concerned citizens." The numbers 6 million and 400,000 have probably been reported thousands of times in newspaper, magazine, and TV stories; they have been used in countless debates, lectures, and presentations all over the country.

But where do the numbers come from? A footnote in the NRC report attributes them, without any page reference, to the 1991 CDC report "Preventing Lead Poisoning in Young Children." But that document contains no mention of 6 million children or

Mr. Samuel is working on a book about soil-lead issues with the George C. Marshall Institute.

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400,000 fetuses; indeed, it includes no estimate at all of the number of children supposedly "at risk."

Through the office of the chairman of the NRC lead-poisoning panel, the NRC press office, and the National Academy of Sciences (NAS) staff, I tracked down the man who had come up with these figures. Dr. Richard D. Thomas, a former NAS staffer, told me he'd been given the numbers over the telephone by people he declined to name at the Centers for Disease Control. They had told him the figures were in the CDC document, so he cited it. He suggested I call the CDC about the numbers and the bum reference.

More Exaggeration

MEANWHILE, I came across another wild number, this one in the November 1992 issue of the *American Journal of Diseases of Children*. Dr. John F. Rosen, a senior pediatric physician at the Albert Einstein College of Medicine in New York City and then chairman of the CDC's advisory committee on childhood lead poisoning, wrote that "about 40 per cent of white children between the ages 0.5 [and] 5 years are estimated to have BPb [blood lead] greater than 10μg/dl, the current definition of childhood lead poisoning." He attributed the number to the same CDC report cited by the NRC. Yet no such estimate appears in the report.

Sue Binder, a senior lead-poisoning official at the CDC, told me both references were wrong. She thought the NRC and Dr. Rosen might have been referring to "some modeling" done for another federal agency, the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR). The 6-million figure was in currency back then, she told me, based on 1984 numbers. "This happens a lot," she said. "People often make mistakes in their references. They get us mixed up, especially us and ATSDR."

The CDC survey found that 6 per cent of white children were over the "at-risk" threshold in 1988–91, not 40 per cent. And given the steady decline in lead levels during the last few decades, the number is probably 4 to 5 per cent now. So the chairman of the government's leading expert advisory group on lead poisoning has committed himself in print to an estimate that exaggerates the extent of the problem by eight to ten times.

Furthermore, 10 micrograms per deciliter is a ridiculous standard for lead poisoning. The alarmists claim there is compelling evidence of serious damage to IQ and brain development in children at this level. To her credit, Jane Brody cited a couple of the research groups that have found no such evidence, including a British–Australian team led by Stuart Pocock of the Medical Statistics Unit at the London School of Hygiene, and Claire Ernhart, a child psychologist at the Case Western Medical School in Cleveland. Using the 10-microgram standard, 88 per cent of American children in the late 1970s and about 99 per cent in the 1950s suffered from lead poisoning. If we use a 25-microgram standard, the internationally accepted and pre-1991 U.S. definition, the share of white children "poisoned" in 1988–91 would be 0.4 per cent. By that measure, Dr. Rosen's estimate is a hundredfold exaggeration.

But why is Rosen emphasizing white children? After all, black children are more at risk, since they are more likely to be poor, to suffer from malnutrition, and to live in houses with crumbling lead paint. Linking the problem to white children, however, helps drum up votes in Congress for more lead-abatement money, more CDC money, and more lead-research money. With any luck, members of Congress and their overworked staffs won't bother to check the numbers. □

Anatomy of a Scam

HUNTING RHINOS

The flap over a new brand of ammunition shows that anti-gun crusaders don't like to deal with the facts.

ROBERT A. LUCAS

IF A small-time manufacturer from the far east side of lower nowhere called a press conference tomorrow and announced that he had perfected a new "wonder fluid," derived from common seawater, that could grow hair, run your sports car, cure bad breath, and get your dog elected Queen of the May, it is not unreasonable to assume that the press would greet the announcement with a certain healthy skepticism. But let an unknown chemist from Huntsville, Alabama, venture into the domestic arms race with a new kind of handgun ammunition that allegedly penetrates soft body armor and another said to explode a human body with a single shot, and the ladies and gentlemen of the press become instant believers.

Alas, the fine print went all but unnoticed in the resulting media firestorm. Buried at the bottom of the initial reports was the detail that "Black Rhino" ammo would be marketed—to law-enforcement agencies and licensed dealers only—at about $4 a round. By comparison, a fifty-round box of 9-millimeter conventional hollowpoint ammunition can be had for between $16 and $20, or roughly 32 to 40 cents per cartridge. Considering that the cost of producing the Black Rhino differs from that of other ammo in only one component (the projectile), a few warning flags should have gone up early on. But the facts were not allowed to get in the way of a good story. AP and UPI, the three major networks, hundreds of daily newspapers, and the other dependable allies of the anti-gun movement bit like rising trout.

Representative Charles Schumer (D., N.Y.) and Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan (D., N.Y.) raced to get before the cameras to propose legislation banning the infernal contraptions. It was Schumer by a nose. (In fairness, he is the younger man.) How sweet it was, therefore, to see the winner squirm on the Thursday, December 29, edition of

Mr. Lucas is a firearms consultant in Illinois.

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Nightline when the whole thing started to come unglued. Someone in the media had done the unthinkable: inquired into the facts. In their worst nightmare, the anti-gun leadership never imagined that someone on their side would be so careless as to inject hard data into a discussion of gun control.

A little poking around by ABC produced a segment featuring testing by the prestigious H. P. White Labs of the Black Rhino ammunition that was available at the time. The claims of David Keen, the inventor of Black Rhino, were shot full of holes when a typical policeman's protective vest wasn't. The Black Rhino round performed about as well as a conventional high-speed hollowpoint, denting the test material but falling far short of penetration. Fired into ballistic gelatin, it produced cavities no more impressive than those created by hollowpoints that have been on the market for decades. And the ammunition demonstrated such erratic velocities that it could not reliably cycle the action of a semiautomatic pistol. Any home reloader who discovered, as H. P. White did, a 25 to 35 per cent variation in projectile speed would junk that batch and start over.

At the risk of rubbing it in a little harder, let's review the highlights of the press's recent foray into arms control. *Newsweek* broke the story during the week of December 19 with a brief mention in the "Periscope" column. *Newsweek*'s Peter Kottell explained on *Nightline* that he simply took the information from the inventor. His verification of the story consisted of a conversation with a firearms dealer he knows and a phone call to the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms. After learning that the new round resembled ammunition already on the market, and that none of it would perform according to the claims being made for the Rhino, he nevertheless reported the manufacturer's claims without qualification.

The story was quickly picked up by the Associated Press, and by the end of that week the "Black Rhino" had replaced the Toilet Monster and the Grinch That Stole Christmas in the imagination of the media. The things hadn't been tested or even seen by anyone other than the inventor, but this did not deter the redoubtable Charles Schumer. "Today I'm announcing introduction of legislation that will ban all cop-killer bullets," he said at a December press conference. "These bullets, such as the Black Rhino, have only one purpose in mind, and that is to kill policemen."

"This is my favorite watering hole."

Certainly this would be a poor way to treat the folks Mr. Keen claimed were his principal customers. The phrase "cop-killer" bullet has been around for more than a decade. In fact, not a single policeman has been killed by a handgun bullet through a protective vest since concealable body armor

Flight from Reality

GUN-CONTROL advocates have been setting themselves up for a fall like this for a long time. It is crucial for them to keep hard facts out of any discussion of firearms. If they permitted a dialogue involving real knowledge of the subject, every major piece of firearms legislation, all the way back to the Gun Control Act of 1968, would be in jeopardy.

Indeed, many of the talking heads featured prominently on the evening news cannot distinguish a bullet from a breadbox and see their ignorance as a virtue. Senator Dianne Feinstein (D., Calif.) summed it up neatly in last year's debate over the "assault weapon" ban when she opined that, having seen someone die of a bullet wound, she had all the technical data she needed. This is down on all fours with seeing a golfer killed by lightning and therefore claiming an ability to predict the weather. As with so many other ideas embraced by the Left, it is far more important to feel than to think.

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first became generally available back in the Seventies. But Representative Schumer displayed a remarkable resistance to that fact as well as to the sudden deflation of the Rhino's reputation. On the December 29 edition of *Nightline*, he put up a crock of the well-known article in anticipation of the long congressional winter ahead like a prairie housewife canning vegetables:

> REPRESENTATIVE SCHUMER: So this is a real problem, and I think the issue is not whether David Keen is a charlatan—your piece proves that quite well—but rather, will Tanya Metaksa [a National Rifle Association spokeswoman, who had warned anyone in the media who would listen that the whole thing smelled like a hoax] and everyone else join in putting together legislation that says all cop-killer bullets, whoever invents them, are banned, and we ought to ban them before coming out on the market, unlike—
>
> CHRIS WALLACE: But Congressman, doesn't it look like a knee-jerk reaction? Doesn't it, in some sense, hurt your credibility when you come out in a news conference and call for banning a bullet that appears now may not exist?
>
> REPRESENTATIVE SCHUMER: Well, I never called for banning this particular bullet. My very point was—

Mr. Schumer's very point was that no ban that took into account the composition of the bullet in question would satisfy him. His pet bill—the one he tried to push through the last Congress—would have banned any bullet that could penetrate a concealable vest, giving considerable latitude to the BATF to decide what goes on the forbidden list. Yet police body armor was never designed to be absolutely bulletproof. It comes in various levels and grades, but no concealable vest is meant to withstand rifle fire. Mr. Schumer's legislation, construed by the BATF under the supervision of the Clinton White House, could have resulted in banning most of the ammunition currently produced for hunting. That would include ammunition for granddad's 30-30 Winchester and the trophy Mauser *his* daddy brought back from the crusade against the Kaiser. As with the Black Rhino flap, only a few of the people who supported earlier versions of the cop-killer ammo bill actually knew what the effects of the proposed legislation would be, and they kept that knowledge to themselves. Most of their accomplices in Congress and in the media did not know, and the last thing they wanted was for anyone to tell them.

Since ABC's inexplicable act of treachery, mention of the Black Rhino has become as scarce as—well, as scarce as real black rhinos. If he is determined to pass Rhino legislation, perhaps Mr. Schumer could turn his attention to this magnificent beast, which tends to treat Land Rovers the way Mr. Schumer treats inconvenient facts. David Keen has withdrawn *his* Rhino from the market (a neat trick considering that it was never actually *on* the market), his hopes of conning anybody out of $4 a pop pretty much shot. *Newsweek* lowered its Periscope. The Associated Press, having discovered that "AP" in military parlance means "armor piercing," wonders if the whole thing wasn't some kind of weird name karma. The NRA has gone back to doing what it does best: dealing with people who know what they're talking about. And the Honorable Mr. Schumer has gone back to doing what he does best: shilling for people who hope that you and I don't. □

Ahead of the Curve

PAY HAZARD

Despite clear evidence that the minimum wage causes unemployment, the Administration is pushing a hike.

PETE DU PONT

"MANY well-meaning people favor legal minimum wage rates in the mistaken belief that they help the poor," Nobel laureate Milton Friedman has observed. "It has always been a mystery to me why a youngster is better off unemployed at $4.75 an hour than employed at $4.25."

Pretty much everyone—from Milton Friedman to the Congressional Budget Office to the 1987 editorial board of the *New York Times*—agrees that raising the minimum wage increases unemployment. Under the headline, "The Right Minimum Wage: $0.00," a *New York Times* editorial concluded that the minimum wage was "an idea whose time has passed." The CBO estimates that President Clinton's proposal to increase the minimum wage from $4.25 to $5.15 would cost 500,000 jobs—mostly the jobs of teenagers, minorities, and part-time workers.

There is a nearly perfect correlation between minimum-wage hikes and both teenage and non-white unemployment (see chart). Poverty rates rise dramatically just after the minimum wage rises. And now there is fresh evidence that raising the minimum wage has also helped trigger recessions.

This link has been brought to light by Richard Vedder and Lowell Gallaway, two economists at Ohio University. In a study for the National Center for Policy Analysis, Vedder and Gallaway document a connection between the 1974–75 and 1990–91 recessions and increases in the minimum wage. They say a good case can also be made that the 1979–80 economic downturn and the recession that began in 1981 were linked to minimum-wage increases. It is more difficult to isolate causes in those instances, because of the high inflation rate and other economic factors that could have played a part. But in the 1990–91 and 1974–75 recessions, minimum-wage increases appear to have been the straw that broke the camel's back.

Look at the start of our most recent recession. The minimum wage was raised by 45 cents (an increase of more than 13 per cent) on April 1, 1990. Hourly compensation, which had risen 3.5 per cent in 1989, rose at an 8.4 per cent annual rate for the next three months, far more than economic

Mr. du Pont, former governor of Delaware, is policy chairman of the National Center for Policy Analysis.

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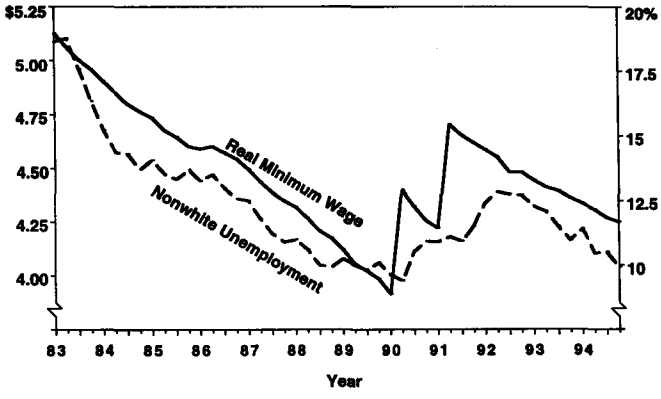
growth and increased productivity warranted. Unemployment jumped, too, from 5.3 per cent in April 1990 to nearly 6.5 per cent in April 1991. More than 800,000 civilian jobs had been created in the six months before April 1, 1990; more than 350,000 jobs were lost in the six months after April 1.

Usually, a year after a recession begins, market forces push the unemployment rate down. The stage was set for that to happen in early 1991; the annual growth rate of hourly compensation was back to 3 per cent. But there was another 45-cent hike in the minimum wage on April 1, 1991. Annual growth in hourly compensation jumped back to 4.6 per cent, and unemployment continued to rise, reaching 7 per cent by the end of 1991.

Much the same thing happened in the 1974–75 recession. After the minimum wage was increased by 25 per cent on April 1, 1974, hourly compensation grew at an annual rate of 12 per cent, compared to 7.3 per cent in the previous year, and unemployment rose from about 5 per cent to 7.2 per cent by the end of 1974. Nine months after the first increase, the minimum wage was bumped up another 5 per cent, and unemployment rose to 9 per cent by the spring of 1975.

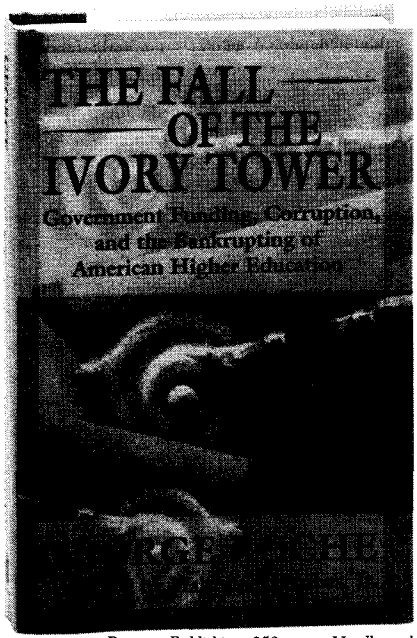
Real Minimum Wage and Unemployment Rate of Nonwhites



Vedder and Gallaway looked all the way back to the Great Depression and discovered that instituting a minimum wage made that bad situation even worse. In June 1933, Congress passed the National Industrial Recovery Act, which included a minimum wage. It was a high minimum: more than 90 per cent of the average hourly wage rate. The impact was immediate. The unemployment rate, which had fallen by 5 percentage points from March to July 1933, immediately flattened and stayed at around 22 to 23 per cent. When the NIRA was declared unconstitutional in 1935, ending the minimum-wage requirement, there was a dramatic improvement in employment. By 1937, the unemployment rate had fallen to about 12 per cent.

Despite this experience, the Clinton Administration is still pushing a 21 per cent increase in the minimum wage, relying on some studies by economists David Card, Lawrence Katz, and Alan Krueger. Card and Krueger compared fast-food employment in New Jersey, which raised the state minimum wage, and Pennsylvania, which didn't. They concluded that raising the minimum wage not only causes very little unemployment but may increase jobs.

On March 29, Richard Berman of the Employment Policies Institute released



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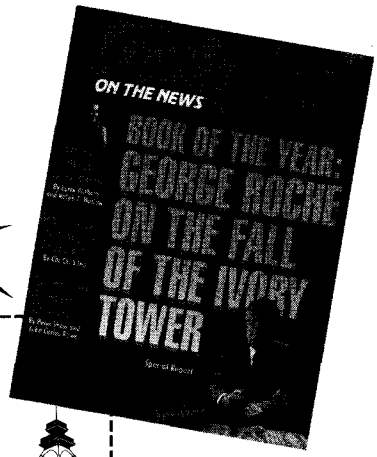

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a devastating analysis of Card and Krueger's study. Berman analyzed actual payroll data, instead of responses to a single telephone question, and found that Card and Krueger had got it wrong. In fact, Berman concludes, "New Jersey's employment growth *lagged* Pennsylvania's by 5 percentage points." This study reaffirms what everyone already knows: when the price of a good (in this case, labor) is raised, demand for it falls. The Berman analysis even quantifies the effect: "Every 10 per cent increase in the minimum wage decreased employment by 2.7 per cent."

So the minimum wage turns out to be one of our leading killers—a killer of economic growth and economic opportunity among the young, the poor, and the minority community. It's time to stop it before it kills again. □

The Politics of Violence Against Women

THE UNFAIR SEX?

In the fight against rape and domestic violence, men are now presumed guilty.

WENDY McELROY

THE April 9 march on Washington to protest violence against women was yet another attempt to politicize the crimes of rape and domestic assault. Boosted by fresh funding from last year's Omnibus Crime Act, feminist advocacy groups are pushing the images of women as victims and men as beasts. Gloria Steinem declares that "the most dangerous situation for a woman is . . . [to be with] a husband or lover in the isolation of their own home." A massive billboard campaign proclaims: "One woman is battered every 15 seconds." Upon appointing the head of the Justice Department's new Violence Against Women Office, President Clinton declared that rape has increased three times faster than other crimes in the last decade. Yet according to the latest National Crime Victimization Survey, conducted by the U.S. Bureau of Justice Statistics, sexual assaults on women *declined* 20 per cent from 1992 to 1993. And the same survey that found that a woman is beaten every 15 seconds also found that a man is battered every *14* seconds. This research indicates that 54 per cent of all "severe" domestic violence is committed by women. It's strange that we rarely hear *these* statistics.

In the current climate of hysteria, those who question the conventional wisdom are denounced as enemies of women. Radical feminists are using the issues of domestic violence and rape to create a new jurisprudence that assesses guilt and imposes punishment based on gender. In *Feminism Unmodified*, University of Michigan law professor Catharine MacKinnon argues that "some of the same reasons children are granted some specific legal avenues of redress . . . also hold true . . . for women." Lenore Walker, director of the Domestic Violence Institute and the leading exponent of "battered woman syndrome," explains the political underpinnings of violence against women: "A feminist political gender analysis has reframed the problem of violence against women as one of misuse of power by men who have been socialized into believing they have the right to control the women in their lives, even through violent means."

The Violence Against Women Act (VAWA), which Congress approved last year as part of the Omnibus Crime Act, advances the radical-feminist goal of redistributing power from the ruling class (men) to the oppressed class (women). VAWA defines "gender-motivated crimes" as federal civil-rights violations, converting domestic violence and rape into "hate crimes." The law recognizes men and women as antagonistic classes to be governed by different standards of law.

VAWA allows not only criminal prosecution but also civil suits for "the recovery of compensatory and punitive damages, injunctive and declaratory relief, and such other relief as a court may deem appropriate." Just as "crimes motivated by race" can be tried under federal civil-rights statutes, so too can "crimes motivated by gender." In effect, a man can be tried (and punished) twice for the same crime. Furthermore, by making rape a civil offense as well as a crime, feminists avoid the need to prove rape "beyond a reasonable doubt." All a civil court requires is "a preponderance of the evidence."

The success of "battered woman syndrome" as a defense in murder cases also illustrates how standards of justice have been warped by the politicization of violence against women. Traditionally, a plea of self-defense required imminent danger without the possibility of escape. Today, courts are acquitting women who kill abusive husbands in their sleep.

What the Research Shows

SUCH deviations from traditional legal standards are driven largely by the perception that domestic violence is something that men do to women. As we have seen, this is a myth. The research cited above is far from an isolated case. In 1975 and 1985, sociologists Murray A. Strauss and Richard J. Gelles conducted what may be the best available studies of family violence. They found that men were as likely as women were to be victims of domestic violence (though women are more likely to be seriously injured). Indeed, in the decade between the two studies, the rate of violence by men against women dropped, while the rate of violence by women against men rose. To counter the charge of "gender bias," Strauss reran the 1985 numbers using only the responses of women—and came up with the same results.

Other studies also indicate that men

(*Continues on page 88*)

Miss McElroy, a contributing editor to Liberty, *is the author of* Freedom, Feminism, and the State *(Holmes and Meier) and* XXX: A Woman's Right to Pornography, *forthcoming from St. Martin's.*

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THE VICE PRESIDENT
WASHINGTON

April 9, 1995

Dear Rusty,

I'm writing to you while I unwind from this evening, which Tipper and I spent with Bill and Mrs. William J. Clinton and the rest of the Cabinet, watching the CBS News live broadcast of Newt Gingrich's speech.

Can you believe this guy? He's the Speaker of the House, for gosh's sake, not the President, and here he is delivering a divisive, partisan speech in prime time, and CBS News—alone among the broadcast networks—is carrying it live! Dan Rather sent Bill an "I'm sorry" ice cream cake, which Bill told us was delicious, but I can't just forgive and forget.

Worse, the speech was also being broadcast by National Public Radio, who I would have thought knew better. Nina Totenberg called on Mrs. William J. Clinton, all smiles and apologies, but Mrs. Clinton claimed a "hot weather headache" and refused to receive her. Actually, Mrs. C. was pretty busy, I'm told, putting this little gathering together, pressing the dried spring flowers into place cards, baking the puff-pastry hors d'oeuvres, and quilting a little TV remote control cozy, so maybe she did have a headache after all.

We had a nice dinner—vegetable samosas, chicken vindaloo, onion pakoras, sesame naan bread, all from Mrs. Clinton's trip to Pakistan—and settled in to watch the speech.

Donna Shalala left early, after we all refused to flip back and forth to "Baywatch," and Bob Reich and Janet Reno had a hard time picking a place to sit, but by the time the speech got under way, we were all quiet. And we were quiet for a while after the speech too. As Mrs. William J. Clinton cleared the plates, Bill got the ball rolling.

"What do you think, George?" he asked George Stephanopoulos.

George shrugged. "Piece of cake. The guy is a right-wing kook. We'll steamroller right over him."

Paul Begala hung up the phone and turned to the group: "Focus group reactions in Denver, Sacramento, Columbus, and Atlanta give the speech a 94 across the board. The word 'presidential' was used in Denver and Columbus."

George shrugged. "Piece of cake. The guy is a right-wing kook. We'll steamroller right over him."

Begala returned from the fax. "The positive/negatives are in: 77 percent rate the speech as 'positive' and 12 'negative.' "

George shrugged. "Piece of cake. The guy is a —"

"What do you think, Al?" Bill asked.

"Well," I said, "Maybe we should be more—"

"If I could interrupt you, for a moment, Al," Mrs. William J. Clinton said, "you gentlemen know best, of course, but if the country is moving to the right, well, shouldn't we move with them? Oh, but I'm being silly. Coffee? Tea?"

Tipper perked up. "I think Hills is on to something," she said.

"Why, thank you, Tipper," Mrs. Clinton said, passing around a tray of cookies.

I thought about it for a moment. "Bill," I said, "here's what we do. I make a few overtures to the right, establish myself as a moderate, pick up some support in the center, and you shore up the base: unions, minorities, professors, that kind of thing."

"I totally agree," Tipper said.

"Yeah," Bill said. "Or, I make the overtures to the right and you shore up the base."

"Either way," I said.

"Just a sec," Tipper said. "First of all, Hillary, these are delicious cookies. Secondly, wouldn't it be more . . . natural for Al to move to the center? I mean, he's always been identified as a moderate and—"

"Cream? Sugar?" Mrs. William J. Clinton asked. "Thank you so much, Tipper. I'll be happy to give you the recipe. You know, I can't help thinking that it should be Bill who moves to the center and Al who shores up the base. That's a lovely scarf, by the way."

"Hey, look, either way," I said.

"Well, thank you so much, Hillary. I'll let you borrow it sometime. But you know, Al has always been identified as a moderate, a centrist, since . . . I don't know . . . I guess you have to go all the way back to when he volunteered for military service during the Vietnam War."

Uh-oh, I thought.

"Time to go, Tip," I said. I grabbed the coats, nodded to Bill, and pulled Tipper to the door. Mrs. Clinton put down her tray and followed us.

"That's a fascinating insight, Tipper. Of course, I always thought that Al was more closely identified with the far-left-radical-fringe-Earth-First crowd, which makes it all the more logical that he—"

"Shut up!" Tipper snapped.

"You shut up!" Mrs. Clinton snapped back.

I pulled Tipper into the car. It's going to be a long, long two years, Rusty.

Your pal, Al

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Americans First? A Symposium

Peter Brimelow's article "Time to Rethink Immigration?" appeared in the June 22, 1992, issue of NR, *and its effects are still with us. This month Random House publishes Mr. Brimelow's book,* Alien Nation, *which grew out of that article. Before June 1992, immigration was a marginal issue. By 1993 it was among the most hotly debated questions of public policy; and by March 1995, with the emergence of Governor Wilson as a presidential candidate, it had become almost the entire basis of a campaign for national office. While readers of* NR *will know why we welcome the heightened awareness of the issue, they will also know that our view is not shared by all conservatives. For that reason, we offer four reviews of* Alien Nation, *representing a range of opinion on this critical question.* —*DK*

Hercules and the Hydra

SAMUEL FRANCIS

AFTER a decade and a half of confinement to fairly obscure pamphlets and technical monographs, the case against massive immigration has at last found a champion whose book, in the wake of the landslide passage of California's Proposition 187 last year, is likely to inform and shape the national discussion of immigration for years to come. As both a consumer and a producer of such obscure literature myself, I have to acknowledge that the author, a respected financial journalist at *Forbes* and a senior editor of this magazine, as well as a sort of perennial immigrant—from Great Britain to Canada to the United States—has mined those pamphlets and monographs well.

Alien Nation: Common Sense about America's Immigration Disaster, by Peter Brimelow (Random House, 288 pp., $23)

Peter Brimelow's *Alien Nation* reproduces much of their argument and research in a format that makes it both the most comprehensive and the most readable contribution to the anti-immigration side now available.

One feature of *Alien Nation* that makes it particularly useful is the way its author constructed it. The book is essentially an extended debate with the proponents of "open borders," mainly Julian Simon, Robert Bartley of the *Wall Street Journal*, and their followers. One by one, like Hercules whacking away at the heads of the Hydra, Mr. Brimelow cuts down the major arguments for immigration and puts the torch to their roots.

The claims that current immigration figures are exaggerated, that open immigration is deeply grounded in American political traditions, that large-scale immigration is economically beneficial, and that it is politically and culturally harmless all fall to his merciless sword. The polemical structure of the book thus allows readers wedded to the open-borders dogma, or unfamiliar with its finer implications and presuppositions, to follow (and perhaps even approve) Mr. Brimelow's surgical destruction of it.

His case rests on two propositions: 1) as the U.S. Census Bureau reported a couple of years ago, current levels of immigration, coupled with current levels of fertility among immigrants and indigenous non-whites and declining fertility among indigenous whites, will in the next sixty years or so reduce the historical white, European-descended majority of the United States to a minority, and 2) this ethnic and racial revolution portends a social transformation that will jeopardize not only the cultural identity of the country but also its very political unity as a nation-state.

The arguments that develop from these claims run counter to the conception of America as an "idea," a "proposition," or a "creed." That conception implies that the United States has almost a bottomless capacity to absorb and assimilate immigrants, since "assimilation" would consist in little more than mere assent to the credal identity of the nation. But Mr. Brimelow performs meticulous surgery here as well, showing, for example, that both the Declaration of Independence and *The Federalist* assumed ethnic and cultural homogeneity as a precondition of a coherent nationhood. The point, of course, is that whatever ideas enter into the definition of America as a political order, those ideas depend for their proper functioning on a population that accepts them as habits balanced and defined by other habits rather than as newly learned precepts and abstractions. It is unlikely that massive numbers of immigrants will doff their old cultural garments and don new ones comfortably. Hence, large-scale immigration represents a threat to the cultural homogeneity, and thus the political unity, of the nation.

Much the same lesson of preconditions applies to the free market, which advocates of open borders invariably invoke as the great solvent of whatever cultural differences immigrants may import. Mr. Brimelow argues that "the free market necessarily exists within a societal framework. And it can only function if the institutions in that framework are appropriate. . . . Economists have a word for these preconditions: the 'metamarket.' *Some degree of ethnic and cultural coherence may be among these preconditions.* Thus immigration may be a metamarket issue." He parts com-

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pany here, at least implicitly, with those who see the functioning of the market as a natural, universal process rather than a cultural artifice and therefore the product of a particular and unique historical legacy. If the market depends on both moral and cultural presuppositions, then ethnic fragmentation will undermine the market itself.

Mr. Brimelow's main case against immigration, then, is a cultural one rather than the usual economistic quibbling over how many jobs Mexicans take from black waiters and so forth. But despite his attention to culture in principle, he is surprisingly muted on its specifics. He fails to discuss in any detail the significant cultural changes that mass immigration is bringing (there are now whole cities where English is virtually a second language). Nor does he delve much into the extent to which non-Western immigration drives the cult of multiculturalism in education. Much of the cultural case against immigration was developed by the Rockford Institute's magazine *Chronicles* long before it became fashionable to do so, but Mr. Brimelow mentions the magazine and its contributors only briefly. Dare I suggest that perhaps a native American, or at least a non-Manhattanite, might display a firmer grasp of American cultural specifics?

Yet the cultural argument remains the core of *Alien Nation*, and properly so. By driving the debate over immigration to that level and making the argument as closely and as seriously as he does, Mr. Brimelow has ensured that his book is not only the main source for the strongest case for immigration restriction in decades but also an important contribution to American political thought on the very eve of what he fears "could easily be the snuffing out of the American nation like a candle in a gale." □

Culture Vulture

FRANCIS FUKUYAMA

PETER Brimelow deserves praise for going to the heart of the immigration issue, which is not about economics but about the nature of American nationality. There is a tendency among proponents of immigration to argue that America, unlike most other nations in the world, is built around a set of universalistic liberal ideas, and that it has no national identity beyond the Constitution and the system of law based on it. Brimelow argues, quite rightly, that no nation can be built in so abstract a manner. And the United States has not been the exception to this rule: it has always been a community with a common culture set by its dominant elites.

So far so good. But the question then becomes, What is the precise nature of that national identity and common culture? Here, it is possible to be much more precise than Mr. Brimelow. American culture comes from the Puritan sectarian religious heritage of the early Anglo-Saxon settlers, together with the Lockean-liberal ideology they had adopted by the eighteenth century. This alone explains America's work ethic (traditionally and today much higher than that of England), its entrepreneurial and innovative character, its prudery and moralism, the high level of trust in its society, and in particular the strange and fortuitous coexistence of individualism and a powerful propensity for community (Tocqueville's famous "art of association").

Brimelow, however, picks a strange definition of what he means by America as a national community. At times he edges toward defining it as a "Christian" country, but backs away (perhaps because this would exclude his Jewish neoconservative friends and include all those Mexican illegal aliens). In the end, he explains the content of "American" national identity in old-fashioned, blood-and-soil racial terms: it is the culture of white (i.e., European-origin) Americans.

But who are "white" Americans? The U.S. is the only country in the world that thinks there is a cultural group called "whites." In Europe there are only Germans, Italians, Poles, Magyars, Croats, and the like. (There are also some limp-wristed "Europeans," but I'm sure Mr. Brimelow doesn't take them seriously.) The strange category of "white" exists in the U.S. only because the original Protestant Anglo-Saxon settlers of the country took in, successively, other Protestants from Central and Northern Europe, then a large group of Catholic Irish, and then, in the great immigration wave at the turn of the century, an extremely large group of Catholic and Jewish immigrants from southern Italy, the Austro-Hungarian Empire, Russia, and elsewhere. Though this is not always apparent today, the degree of cultural and *perceived* racial distance between these groups was *every bit as great* at the time they arrived here as the distance between the "median" Anglo of today (named Pezzuli or Steinberg) and a recent Mexican immigrant. Hence, the common American culture that both Mr. Brimelow and I find so important is actually a sectarian Protestant Anglo-Saxon culture that was somehow detached from its ethnic roots, mixed with universalistic Lockean-liberal principles, and adopted by the non-Anglo-Saxon, non-Protestant immigrants from Europe who arrived subsequently, and who then intermarried to such an extent that it is no longer meaningful to try to determine what proportion of the country is descended from Italians, Swedes, and the like. And the rate of intermarriage between natives and recent non-European immigrants is so high that it makes as little sense to worry about the U.S. becoming a "majority non-white" country by the middle of the next century as it did to worry about it becoming "majority non-Anglo-Saxon" in the last. Yet Brimelow for some reason insists on describing in racial and ethnic terms a national identity that can only be properly characterized in *cultural* terms.

He does somewhat of the same thing when describing the post-1965 immigration as predominantly coming from the "Third World." The Third World is a very big place, and, as it turns out, this immigration wave decomposes overwhelmingly into two significant groups: Latinos and

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Asians. Brimelow is very cagey about the Asians: while admitting that many Americans "seem" to think Asians have the right cultural values, he is not so sure and will reserve judgment. The fact is that there is a mountain of empirical evidence indicating not just that Asians *may* have the right "Puritan, Anglo-Saxon" virtues, but that they have them to a significantly *higher* degree than people actually of Protestant Anglo-Saxon descent (many of whom are today either ultra-liberals pushing the multiculturalist agenda, or else poorly educated, low-income workers in the rural South, whose families are fraying and whose politics are increasingly up for grabs as a result of their downward social mobility).

Missing from *Alien Nation* is any acknowledgment of the positive characteristics of immigrants, which in virtually all countries give them a higher level of drive and ambition than the natives. One consequence is that immigration has become critical to America's global technological leadership. Far too few well-educated, native white Americans today want to become engineers, as opposed to lawyers, investment bankers, or journalists, and immigration has played a key role in bridging this labor gap for a couple of generations now. This impact may not be evident to people in non-technical fields, but it is borne out by the statistics: a third of the engineers in Silicon Valley are foreign-born, including some 12,000 ethnic Chinese. Brimelow argues that even if immigrants were responsible for the entire computer industry, this would "only" account for $120 billion of the American GDP—as if $120 billion a year were chump change, and as if the only significance of the high-tech sector to the U.S. economy were the direct earnings of its firms.

Far more important than economics, however, is culture. Brimelow legitimately worries that the "browning" of America will lead to a loss of its culture and national identity. The rhetoric of the multiculturalists he cites is truly frightening: their hope is that the changing racial composition of America will in fact lead to its "Third Worldization." In taking this threat seriously, however, Brimelow makes the mistake of assuming that racial, cultural, and political boundaries will all coincide. That is, he assumes that all non-European minorities will support multiculturalist policies, and vote Democratic to boot, while whites as a group will support traditional values and resist this trend. Mr. Brimelow seems not to have noticed that multiculturalism would never have gotten anywhere but for the support of countless white school board members, schoolteachers and university professors. In fact, the two most powerful groups actively promoting the Balkanization of traditional American culture today have been feminists and gays, groups that are almost entirely controlled by middle-class whites. The one way that the Republican Party could lose its emerging majority-party status is by defining itself as white and anti-immigrant, thereby turning its back on middle-class Hispanics and Asians. Brimelow's own book notes that Asians voted for George Bush in 1992 in proportions exceeded only by evangelical Christians.

Brimelow's fundamental mistake, it seems to me, is his assumption that non-European immigrants will end up like African-Americans—hard to assimilate and therefore angry, resentful, and demanding of special entitlements and set-asides. The truth of the matter, however, is that of America's different racial and ethnic minorities, blacks are the *only* group that has not assimilated successfully. All the others will succeed much like the Irish and Italians before them, *provided* they do not follow the post–civil-rights pattern of seeking socio-economic advancement primarily through political and legal action.

When it comes to concrete policy recommendations, I actually find myself in agreement with many of Brimelow's suggestions. It is certainly possible to reform and streamline the Immigration and Naturalization Service; we can do a much better job of patrolling our borders; the 1965 Immigration Act can be amended to de-emphasize family reunification and to emphasize skills; welfare and other benefits to immigrants ought to be scaled back, not out of meanspiritedness, but for the immigrants' own sake. The most important battle, however, is not over immigration per se, but over the preservation of a common American culture. This means rolling back multiculturalism, bilingualism, race-based preferences, and all the other divisive public-policy innovations of recent decades. For none of the problems of cultural incoherence that Brimelow cites would go away, or even diminish significantly, if all immigration, legal and illegal, ended tomorrow. □

What He Should Have Said

NATHAN GLAZER

THE ENGLISH, it is well known, are often direct and even rude in their disagreements, where Americans are circumlocuitous and fearful of giving offense. I hope that the English national characteristic will be ignored in discussions of Peter Brimelow's important book, without any confidence that it will be. I will put style and manner aside and go directly to the argument.

Mr. Brimelow argues that our immigration policy is a disaster. He believes that there are far too many immigrants being admitted when considered from the point of view of national interest, however defined, and that their costs to public budgets exceed their contribution in taxes. Culturally, they are leading to the dissolution of a distinctive and European-based nation. Politically, he asserts, the number and the ethnic and racial character of the new immigration do not reflect the preferences of the American people. Had the people been asked, and had the implications of the 1965 immigration reform been set before them, they would never have approved. Further, our current wave of immigration, coming into the country at a time when any strong measure toward "Americanizing" immigrants is undermined by prevalent attitudes among American educators and opinion-forming groups, may lead to a terrible divisiveness.

Many of the facts about current immigration given in this book will be surprising even to well-informed readers.

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Some may not be facts at all. (Is it really the case that many of those being admitted under the act permitting Amerasian children from Vietnam to immigrate with their families were born more than nine months after the last American soldiers left Vietnam?) On the whole, though, I think they will stand up.

I have no basic argument with Brimelow's analysis of the economic consequences of current immigration. He believes they are minor, neither negative enough to require action to reduce immigration for economic reasons alone, nor positive enough to indicate that the present level of immigration should be maintained. He believes the value of immigrants to the American economy, whatever it may have been, is declining, as the average level of education and work skills of immigrants falls over time.

There is one aspect of the economic argument to which he gives very little attention, though he does refer to it: What is the effect of immigration on American blacks, the worst off of Americans (except perhaps for Puerto Ricans)? In a book-length analysis, this should have received more attention. I think one reason he spends so little time on this issue is that he makes so much of the white and European ethnic and racial character of the American nation. He is therefore at a loss as to how to make his argument if he gives full weight to the fact that at its Founding the nation was 20 per cent black, and it is now 12 per cent and modestly rising. Even if we were not multicultural in outlook at our birth, we were already multiracial.

If indeed we are at risk of losing our unifying European racial and cultural character because of the non-European character of current immigration, what does one make of this inconvenient reality? If the issue is *race*, the game was lost at the beginning. If the issue is *culture*, matters are somewhat different, but Brimelow, to the credit of his English directness, does not want to give up race as an aspect of national culture. If the racial character changes, he believes, the culture changes. I disagree. I do not see how the fact that 20 per cent or more of the students at our elite colleges and universities are now Asian will change our national culture. How much did it change when the number of Jews entering such institutions rose to 20 per cent or more?

Confusing his argument is the amalgam "non-European," as well as the amalgam "immigrants." Brimelow is well aware that immigration is polarized between those newcomers, mostly from Latin America and the Caribbean, with less education and work skills than the American "average," and those, mostly from Asia, with more education than the American average. All these groups are non-European, except that Latin Americans are closer to being European and white than are Asians. If the issue is capacity to add to the American economy, why does Brimelow's discussion concentrate on immigrants in general, and harp on their overall non-Europeanness? If the issue is the political assimilation of immigrants, one should hear more of the fact that the Asians naturalize much faster than the Latin Americans. (Brimelow charmingly points out—he does often poke fun at himself—that the English are *least* likely to naturalize.) If the issue is assimilation to American culture, we should hear more about differences in the knowledge of English and the speed with which English is taken up.

Brimelow insists on bringing together race and culture, but the linkage makes problems for his thesis. He should be insisting not that America's immigration policy in general is a disaster, but rather that we should favor the better-educated and English-speaking immigrants, as Canada does, and if this means many more Asian immigrants, and fewer Latin American and Caribbean ones, so be it. That is where the logic of his argument points.

But that is not the way the argument reads: Brimelow will be read as saying, and indeed he does say, that there are just too many immigrants because of their race and capacities, period. That is not what the finer print of his case adds up to, however. If we take that fine print seriously, we might guess he would be content simply to halve immigration, cutting off the lower half as measured by education and work skills, which would mean many fewer Latin Americans.

When he comes to his specific recommendations, there is a lot of good sense: Knowing English should be considered a plus in terms of eligibility for immigration. We should elim-

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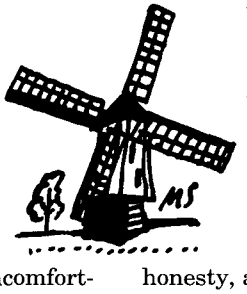
inate automatic citizenship for the children of illegal immigrants. (Peter Schuck proposed this years ago.) The Hispanic category in the census and in public policy should be eliminated. (It encourages a false amalgam. There are Mexicans, Puerto Ricans, Cubans, Dominicans, Nicaraguans, Salvadorans; but to create a category ready-made to exaggerate distinctive grievances, as we have done, is idiotic.) Of course immigrants should be excluded from affirmative action. (It was intended for native minorities, not those who have come willingly because they hoped life here would be better than life where they came from.) Brimelow also believes the borders can be properly policed. I am not sure he is right, but we should try harder.

Yet it is too late for this country to consist of a single race bound to a common culture. I think the new immigrants in the end will be as American as the Indians and West Indians of England will be English, as the Algerians of France will be French, as the Turks of Germany will be German. There will be problems, of course. I doubt, though, that they will match in seriousness a problem that has nothing to do with current immigration: the state and status of black Americans. □

Terms of Engagement

GLENN C. LOURY

ON A RECENT trip to Australia I spent some time with a group of economists and sociologists at the local Bureau of Immigration and Multicultural Research. They were eager to explain to a visiting American how well their country was managing its immigration policy. They stressed two main goals: to encourage newcomers to seek Australian citizenship; and to promote the idea of a multicultural identity, so that these new citizens will not feel it necessary to abandon their cultural heritage as the price of adopting a new nation. What struck me about this policy was its seeming incoherence. In what, precisely, did these analysts imagine Australian national identity to consist? Why would anyone feel loyalty to a country that required so little of him in order to join it? Upon raising these questions, I was assured by my hosts that I should not worry, the policy was working just fine.



Reading Peter Brimelow's *Alien Nation* put me in mind of my trip to Australia. Like this American academic among the Australian bureaucrats, perhaps Brimelow, himself an "outsider," has the perspective, the detachment, necessary to ask uncomfortable questions about American immigration policy. For, if what I found in Melbourne seemed incoherent, what I learned about American policy from Brimelow's engagingly written and informative book makes its Australian counterpart look like brilliant strategic planning. Brimelow is surely correct when he says that no rational account can be given of how the United States "decides" who will, and who will not, come to and live in our country. I find him persuasive as well when he urges that we must not continue in this way.

The broad outline of Brimelow's argument in *Alien Nation* was already discernible in his NATIONAL REVIEW article of three years ago. The rate of sustained net immigration to the United States—legal and illegal—is large. The composition of this flow is problematic, in that these are people with, on average, fewer skills, and greater differences from the national culture, than a nation would wisely welcome in large numbers. This situation is the result of government policy, principally the Immigration Act of 1965, but also of a willful refusal to control our borders. Finally, if the situation continues, the essential character of the nation will change, for the worse, and within the span of a single lifetime.

This argument is not, in my judgment, proved beyond doubt in *Alien Nation*, but I find the case strong enough to warrant careful, detailed, and sustained consideration. One reason I am not fully convinced by Brimelow's argument is that it conflates two distinct concerns: that the bulk of recent immigrants are non-European, and that the skill level of recent immigrants is low relative to that of the incumbent working population. Both of these are true, and yet there is no necessary connection between them. We could easily have a much more discriminatory immigration policy aimed at raising the average level of human and financial capital of new entrants, while maintaining the current, high proportion of non-Europeans. Clearly, it will be easier to effectively assert the desirability of rationing entry on the basis of skills than to win a political argument starting from the premise that America is a white nation whose essential character is undermined by admitting so many non-whites. This is not to say that the latter argument is inherently unethical.

It is a pleasure to read Peter Brimelow at length. He writes straightforwardly, with wit, honesty, and good humor. And he is right, I think, to stress that the formulation of a policy as central to a nation's well-being as that determining who its people shall be must take cultural factors into account. Yet as I said to the Australians, it seems to me less important that new arrivals start out being compatible with "us" than that they end up so. This is not so much a matter of immigration policy as it is of what we might call "assimilation policy." If, like the Australians, we refuse to encourage newcomers to join "us" because we have ourselves lost confidence that there *is* an "us" in the sense of a distinct American people, then we will indeed create mischief. I note, too, as did Tocqueville, that the presence of African slaves at the Founding has meant that from quite early on we have been faced with an "assimilation problem" of some magnitude.

I agree with Mr. Brimelow that multiculturalism, ethnic/racial quotas, and bilingualism are, in the long term, enemies of national unity. But so is Eurocentric chauvinism, a hint of which is evident in his account. The antidote to all these bad "isms" is *individualism*. We have a long way to go, of course, before this becomes the reigning ideology in America; but we will never get there if, as we conduct the long overdue debate on immigration policy, we do so in the terms chosen by Peter Brimelow. □

Mr. Loury is a professor of economics at Boston University and the author of One by One from the Inside Out: Essays and Reviews on Race and Responsibility in America, *due in May from Free Press.*

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About That Baboon . . .

HUGH KENNER

ALL RIGHT, the baboon. It was stuffed and bespectacled and stood in Madame's parlor, wearing a wing collar, morning coat, and tie, with tucked beneath its hairy arm the manuscript of a lecture on *The Origin of Species*, the book alleged to document its kinship with humans. Its name, shared with a prominent Darwinian academic, was "Professor Fiske," and it was clearly either setting forth to deliver the lecture or just back from having done so. The place was New York, the time the mid 1870s.

Helena Petrovna Blavatsky was then in her forties: "A short, stout forceful woman, with strong arms, several chins, unruly hair, a determined mouth, and large, liquid, slightly bulging eyes." Her father was a military man of the lesser Russian–German nobility, her mother a Russian romantic novelist "descended from a much grander noble house." The mother's gift of overlaying banality with fictions was something the daughter inherited; Helena's sister remembered how she and other younger children had been kept entranced by Helena's way of telling how "Each of the stuffed animals had taken her in turn into its confidence, had divulged to her the history of its life in previous incarnations or existences."

That gift was to become Helena's lifelong resource. At 17 she married a forty-something vice governor named Blavatsky; a few weeks later she fled from him. The story of her next quarter-century is a chaos of improvisations studded with occasional fact. She claimed to have ridden bareback in a circus, toured Serbia as a concert pianist, set up as an itinerant spirit medium. In particular, she would boast that she had traveled alone in Tibet and lived there more than seven years. (Seven years is the prescribed "period of apprenticeship for candidates seeking initiation into esoteric mysteries.") That was where certain "Himalayan Masters" revealed to her what the West still knows as Theosophy. What they had to impart is strangely analogous to what the stuffed animals were divulging decades before: cycles of former lives, and the details thereof.

Madame Blavatsky's Baboon: A History of the Mystics, Mediums, and Misfits Who Brought Spiritualism to America, by Peter Washington (Schocken, 470 pp., $27.50)

The strongest argument against Tibetan travel, Mr. Washington suggests, is that "the breathless, tactless, and massively stout Blavatsky managing to climb steep mountains in brutal weather while concealing herself from trained observers is just too difficult to imagine." Far more germane than Tibet is Edward Bulwer-Lytton (1803–73). Madame Blavatsky paid close attention to his occult works: so much so that her new religion "was virtually manufactured from his pages."

By 1875 she was generating *Isis Unveiled*, thirty-page installments of which she would find on her desk of a morning, written by invisible hands while she slept. Or, "a Master would take over her body and write for her, unquestionably a help with a book running to half a million words." Its influence was easily comparable to that of the Book of Mormon. The Theosophical Society was founded "almost by accident" on September 7, 1875. Theosophy "started from the premise that fundamental truths and values are universal and that all religions are essentially the same religion."

To impress outsiders, complicated "phenomena" were staged; brooches vanished and rematerialized, dishes broke and were reconstituted. (Matter, you see, is illusion, dominated by spirit.) There were hints of scandal. An accomplice who felt underpaid muttered threats of exposure. By 1884 the Society for Psychical Research (e.g., Ruskin, Gladstone, Tennyson, William James) had decided to look into these Theosophists.

Investigation followed investigation. Nothing final emerged. HPB was by then "so grotesquely obese that at times she could hardly move, and the combination of illness and fat meant that when she took ship at Madras she

Mr. Kenner's most recent book is Chuck Jones: A Flurry of Drawings *(University of California). He teaches at the University of Georgia.*

OUR NATION OF IMMIGRANTS HAS AN IMMIGRATION PROBLEM.

ALIEN NATION

COMMON SENSE ABOUT AMERICA'S IMMIGRATION DISASTER

PETER BRIMELOW

From a *National Review* editor—a timely, trenchant and tough assessment of America's immigration crisis, the myth of a multicultural society and the realistic, if controversial, solutions.

"Brimelow provides us with common sense on the mounting migration pressures coming to bear on our nation."
— Senator Eugene McCarthy

RANDOM HOUSE

Photograph: Robert Llewellyn/Superstock

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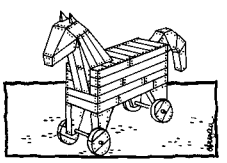
had to be hauled on board in a chair attached to a rope and pulley." By May 8, 1891, she was dead in London.

And with his book but one quarter finished, Peter Washington is suddenly deprived of a focal figure. In the decades of squabbling that ensued, no one as interesting as HPB would emerge; no one with her genuine aura of mystery, or her occasional sudden candor about the need, now and then, to deceive the imperfectly convinced. Her quarrelsome successors were by contrast straightforward con artists.

An exception was the Austrian philosopher Rudolf Steiner (1861–1925), whose father had hoped to steer him into science. But Rudolf instead "discovered the great classics of German literature and philosophy in the library of the local doctor, an eccentric figure who diagnosed patients from a moving train as it passed the station platforms on which they were standing."

Since the doctor never appears in the narrative again, his diagnostic habits are of no relevance; but those last 21 words enshrine a bit of zaniness our author couldn't pass up, perhaps feeling that to compensate for the loss of HPB his book needed all the titters it could muster. There are many such small symptoms. Here's Sir Edwin Lutyens, the architect, present because his wife was a Theosophical fellow-traveler: "A man of strong tastes with a passion for jokes, his pet hates included long-stemmed glasses, fish knives, cut flowers, silk lampshades, pile carpets, the seaside, statistics, painted nails, the diagonal placing of furniture—and, of course, religious enthusiasm." Only that last item, clearly, is pertinent here. Or consider how an ex–Secret Service man named Bennett "experienced a moment of mystical illumination in a cemetery overlooking the Bosporus while recovering from foot-and-mouth disease caught by eating Bulgarian cheese." Though it's the content of the illumination that will matter, what we're apt to remember is that cheese disease. Or sometimes a seeming specificity proves shaky. Here's "Louis Fuller," a dancer; readers of Yeats may remember that the name was "Loie." Or "Amy Semple McPherson": read, of course, "Aimee."

What's lacking, I'd say, is a unifying theme. What hunger do exotic religion-substitutes fulfill, then as now? The money the con artists competed for was after all given willingly. Why? The cliché answer is that Science—i.e., Darwinism—seemed to have ousted Religion, leaving unfulfilled a hunger to which Science isn't equal. What was needed, then, was an exotic religion, capable of reducing the world of scientific expertise to sheer illusion. That seemed to mean getting rid of matter itself. Christian Science had been one contender. The Theosophy of Tibetan sages was another.



Page after page, the narrative of *Madame Blavatsky's Baboon* is more strongly attracted to the con men than to their disciples, though it's the phenomenon of discipleship, indeed its sheer scale, that keeps tickling one's curiosity. In country after country they were numbered in the thousands. Because of Yeats the theme has been much examined with regard to Ireland; but Yeatsian Ireland is a special case. The Irish Theosophists were generally Anglo-Irish, for whom Irish Catholicism, perceived as arid and mechanical, was no alternative. But how to account for so many British disciples? So many French? German? Swiss?

Mr. Washington (by the way a London resident and the current editor of Everyman's Library) has written a diverting book. There's another book still to be written. □

Gass Attack

JAMES BOWMAN

BACK IN the 1960s, when William Gass started working on this book, there were a lot of people writing what was called at the time "experimental" fiction. The experiment, it turned out, was always the same and involved doing away with the constraints of "conventional narrative" in order to allow the author's uninhibited "stream of consciousness" to find its own meandering course through a marshy wilderness of random yet predictable feelings of a (mostly) political or sexual nature. None of these experiments was ever seen to have failed—except, of course, commercially. But, having been pronounced more or less successful by the literary-critical fraternity, they were quietly abandoned as their authors became as bored with them as everyone else was and went off to teach "writing" at some wealthy and indulgent university.

Only a very few, among them Harold Brodkey and William Gass, have since shown that Edisonian dedication which it takes to keep up such experimentation. The pointlessness, the futility of doing so was precisely what kept them going, because pointlessness and futility are indisputably the stuff of real life and real art for those with the Sixties sensibility. And Mr. Gass has compounded his own pointlessness by inventing a pointless hero, a professor of history called William Kohler, who imposes on himself the pointless task of tunneling out of his own basement for no apparent reason. "A cause?" he writes: "I need my exercise. A reason? Everyone ought to have a hobby: a vagina to China."

But this is disingenuous. It is clear that digging the tunnel is meant to dramatize Kohler's self-pity. He feels like a prisoner because he does not like his wife or his children or his job or his dead parents or much of anything else about his past except for the student with whom he had a terribly exciting affair until she decided, quite rightly, that he had "a loathsome mind" and

***The Tunnel*, by William H. Gass (Knopf, 656 pp., $30)**

dumped him. He affects not to like himself either, but this is a narcissistic pose. All he can do about his unhappy life is write about it endlessly in a sub-Faulknerian, sub-Joycean stream-of-consciousness style while pretending to hide the pages from his wife by sticking them between the leaves of the manuscript of *Guilt and Innocence in Hitler's Germany*, his magnum opus, which, like that of his creator, has been long in the making.

Its purpose, too, is obscure, though it seems partly an expiation of Kohler's feelings of guilt for having, as a student in 1938, participated in a minor way in the events of *Kristallnacht*:

> And when I wrote my book, to whom

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was I writing if not the world? . . . the world! . . . the world is William welshing on a bet; it is Olive sewing up the gut of a goose; it is Reynolds raping Rosie on the frat-house stair; it is a low blow, a dreary afternoon, an exclamation of disgust. And when I wrote was I writing to win renown, as it's customarily claimed? or to gain revenge after a long bide of time and tight rein of temper? to earn promotion, to rise above the rest like a loosed balloon? or was it from weak self-esteem? from pure funk, out of a distant childhood fear or recent shame? . . . the world . . . the world, alas. It is Alice committing her Tampax to the trash.

"The world . . . the world, alas," gets left out of it in the end. There is no world save in the narrator's head. No other characters have any independent life in this book, which cares for nothing beyond the carefully polished prose style. It is the style . . . the style, alas. Those elegant inversions, those subtle (or not subtle) alliterations, the unexpected metaphor—all of it cries out to be admired as the work of a man who teaches "writing." He has spent so much time polishing his prose that he no longer has anything to say.

The book does give its author a chance to throw off inhibition, Sixties style, and, in the person of Kohler, write execrable poetry ("I gave up poetry for history in my youth," he repeatedly reminds us, and we wish he had stuck to that) or dirty but unfunny limericks which purport to come from a history-department colleague, Culp. He also gets a kick out of being rude, irreverent, obscene, and even politically incorrect. Thus he tries on the guise of racist or bigot (making between the two a completely incomprehensible distinction) and writes happily of "wops" and "kikes" and "niggers." It is as a spokesman for bigots—people who "hate without an object"—that mad Kohler invents the quasi-fascist fantasy organization, the Party of Disappointed People, for which he passes the time designing insignia.

His own disappointment seems to stem from his wife's sexual distaste for him, which he takes to be sufficient provocation to become a Nazi. If this sounds just a little extreme, it is of a piece with his overall philosophy of history, which is basically that the personal is the political, to coin a phrase. This entitles him to make despicable use of the Holocaust in order to lend some factitious importance to his own boring life by associating it with the tragedy of history. His mother's being made by his father to eat a jelly sandwich on the back porch, for example, invokes the Holocaust because she was not saved from this humiliation any more than the Jews were saved from the gas chambers: "There are no miracles in history. Not in my autobio either. Nor in *G & I* [*Guilt and Innocence in Hitler's Germany*]. In the movies. In the funnies. These days to be innocent is the worst crime."

As the Duke of Wellington said, If you believe that, sir, you'll believe anything. Such tastelessness and moral imbecility are associated by Kohler with his instruction in prewar Germany by a fascist called Magus Tabor, who "believed that anything of which you could form a passionate conception automatically *was*, because the pure purpose of things lay in their most powerful description." Obviously, this is where Kohler/Gass's prose style comes from—from the man who believes that "language replaces life; history usurps the past." By the same token, however, the past is continually present, a thought which produces that favorite trope of the anguished liberal conscience, namely that "We are all charter members of the 4-H Club: Hitler, Hess, Heydrich, Himmler."

This inward evil, this "fascism of the heart," he seems to associate with poetry, which he calls "the inside of history" and to which he returns in the closing pages of the novel. Are the poems included there meant to be *deliberately* bad? And, if so, does that open up the possibility that the novel itself is deliberately bad? The poetry seems to stand for the lost life, the disappointment, all that Kohler did not do by giving it up for history—and for "history." But the real pathos lies in the fact that what the poetry is to Kohler the novel is to William Gass, who has spent most of the last three decades writing it. Robert Kelly, reviewing the book in *The New York Times Book Review*, engages in that publication's characteristic diplomacy by writing that "It will be years before we know what to make of it." What he means is that it will be years before anyone who values his position in the literary world will be able to say out loud what anyone with any sense makes of it now: it's a load of crap. □

Mr. Bowman is American Editor of the Times Literary Supplement.

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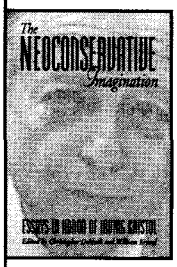

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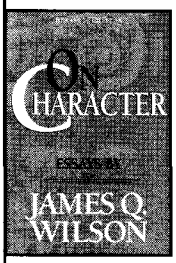

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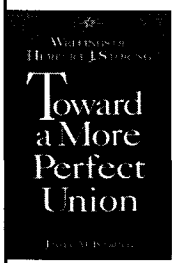

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FILM

All Dressed Up and Nowhere to Go

JOHN SIMON

THE QUESTION with the Merchant–Ivory team is not why they make so many "worthy" but shallow and inept films—that *is* what they do—but how sometimes, as in *The Remains of the Day*, they manage to do better. With ***Jefferson in Paris*** they're once again true to form. For all the bustle, visual display, authentic detail, and some good performances, there is a posturing, contrived, ultimately lifeless quality here, a vapidity beneath the razzle-dazzle.

What did the years Thomas Jefferson spent as our ambassador to France mean—to the two countries concerned, to history, to him? Are we supposed to care about his platonic dalliance with the pretty Maria Cosway, a painter married to a painter? Very well, then, make us feel, for example, what kept the game platonic, and at what cost to the players. Did his alleged concubinage with his slave girl Sally Hemings, said to have borne him several children, teach him something about love or slavery? And if not, why not? Is there anything to be learned from this story that encompasses both the aftereffects of the American Revolution and the beginning of the French one? Why were the enlightened French aristocrats who helped the former along of no use in forestalling or civilizing the latter?

Again, what exactly was Jefferson's relation to his slaves other than Sally? (And in making her the aggressor in the affair with her master, the film is politically correct but historically absurd.) How much did his oath of fidelity to his dying wife affect Jefferson's subsequent affairs? And what was his relationship to his demanding elder daughter, Patsy, drawn equally intensely to her father and to becoming a nun? This, like much else, is at best dabbled in, at worst just dangled before us. So we briefly see an impassioned orator frenziedly inciting the crowd; only from the program can we tell he is Camille Desmoulins. From nothing can we tell his true significance. This is not just a case of not seeing the forest for the trees; it is a case of not seeing the trees for the moss on their bark.

There are many fine actors wasted on poorly written cameo roles. Most conspicuously underused is the great Michel Lonsdale, who with almost nothing to do still manages to make Louis XVI memorable; ditto the excellent Nancy Marchand as a wonderful Abbess, if only she were allowed to do more than speechify. It is nice to see Jean-Pierre Aumont again, but in *this* part? The *doyenne* of the Comédie Française, Catherine Samie, is seen almost subliminally as a cook. Yet how feeble the leads are by comparison! As Jefferson, Nick Nolte is not a disaster, but his performance, foursquare and somewhat stolid like his face, does not convey genius, never mind charm. Greta Scacchi, a beautiful but superficial actress showing premature signs of age, does not look good in periwigs and clown makeup—which, to be sure, resembles the cosmetic excesses of the period—and ends up not as a Fragonard, but as a butchered Boucher.

One of Hollywood's most untalented and unsightly performers, Gwyneth Paltrow (daughter of a famous actress and a successful producer) makes, as usual, an ass of herself as Patsy, as she mopes through the entire movie with the same sagging posture, her face in a single sullen, almost cretinous, expression. Even worse is Simon Callow, who plays the painter Richard Cosway, Maria's husband, as a flaming homosexual. Had Cosway been such, Maria would hardly have married him or, having done so, stayed with him, and faithful to boot. Thandie Newton, who plays Sally, has, not unlike her prototype, an English father and a Zimbabwean mother; at age 16, she was irresistible in John Duigan's *Flirting*. But she has moved to Hollywood, acquiring some of its worst cutesinesses, not to mention a performance here modeled on today's blacks, and thus totally out of character.

James Ivory, the director who after a host of films still hasn't quite learned his trade, must share in the blame. Even more culpable is Ruth Prawer Jhabvala, his regular scenarist, just competent enough to adapt someone else's work for the screen, but not, as here, to write her own scenario. Most surprisingly, that master cinematographer Pierre Lhomme shoots fuzzily for once, perhaps attempting to make the outdoor scenes look like Corot. Even so, his fuzziness is as nothing to that of the picture as a whole. □

Mr. Simon is NR*'s film critic.*

ART

Art—Art!—at the Whitney

JAMES GARDNER

IF THE latest Whitney Biennial does nothing else, it signals the revival of certain artistic ambitions that were dormant if not dead through most of the Eighties and early Nineties. It has restored to us the obligation of looking at the art of our contemporaries as if there were at least the potential, if not yet the reality, of true artistic achievement. And it has restored to us the possibility of once again applying certain critical yardsticks which, as recently as two years ago, would have seemed ludicrously beside the point.

The curator of this exhibition, Klaus Kertess, has taste. Surely it is neither infallible nor exempt from several of the toxic pseudodoxies of the day. What is important is that he should have any taste at all, since this commodity has not been highly regarded around the Whitney in recent years and was entirely absent from the last Biennial. That exhibition, under curator Elisabeth Sussman, was the most political in the history of the institution. Of over eighty artists included, the number of straightforward painters and sculptors could be counted on the fingers of one hand. In choosing Kertess for the present exhibition, the Whitney seems to have recoiled from the rampant extremism in which it was so recently complicit.

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As always, part of this Biennial is devoted to established masters. The painters Agnes Martin and Robert Ryman continue to ring their changes on a severely circumscribed set of minimalist terms. Brice Marden, who took a turn for the worse when he substituted expressionistic spindles for pure blocks, is in the unenviable position of being upstaged by the splashy abstractions of his little-known wife, Helen. And whereas Milton Resnick, with his thickly impasted Art Brut figures, is the grand old man of the present proceedings, Cindy Sherman, by now too old to be an enfant terrible, might want to rethink her affection for photographing prosthetic body parts.

More interesting, however, is the evolution one can detect among less familiar artists. Terry Winters has gone from mediocre to bad, from pleasantly innocuous biomorphic abstractions to pseudo-cubistic lobby art faintly resembling four-day-old lasagna. And yet, is there not something refreshing and even important about these bad paintings? What is startling, at least in a contemporary context, is that their ambitions are entirely old-fashioned. Though Winters may or may not wish to attribute to them new-fangled doctrines, what he is essentially making is art that invokes, though it does not satisfy, all the criteria of Greenbergian formalism. His paintings look exactly like the sort of bad art that showed up in Whitney exhibitions forty years ago.

Philip Taaffe, by contrast, has gone from being bad to meriting serious consideration. As of this moment, he is a rare, if not unique, example of an artist who has outgrown his fealty to postmodernism in order to create abstract images that are increasingly resonant and beautiful. He is still interested in the pattern and design images associated with what is called his Neo-Geo phase, but if the terms of his art are largely the same as they were, the results are much more satisfying, much more pulled together.

A similar resurgence of ambitiousness is detectable (and who would have thought it?) in the paintings of Sue Williams. This artist's puddle of plastic vomit, supposedly representing a bulimic discharge, typified everything bad about the last Whitney Biennial: bad taste allied to the absolute ascendancy of politics (in this case feminism) over art. The painted part of her earlier installation was replete with feministic scribbles and ineptly painted images of liposuction and other forms of female self-mutilation at the behest of the patriarchy. Such preoccupations continue in her latest work but have been reduced to ornament in a predominantly abstract design. What is important here is not that the artist has abandoned politics, but that her subordination of it to picture-making may bespeak a massive shift in the world of contemporary art. A very similar process can be seen in Lari Pittman's paintings, which are as meretricious as ever, with their Visa and American Express cards, corporate logos, and phrases like "Cum n' git it," but which strain mightily to be as popular and attractive and buyable as anything by Roy Lichtenstein.

As the examples of Sue Williams and Lari Pittman suggest, a good deal of political posturing remains in the present Biennial, but there is considerably less of it and it is somehow less anarchic than in the past. Frank Moore attacks family values by remaking a famous Norman Rockwell Thanksgiving dinner scene in which a family, now interracial, is at table, and in which the aproned mother serves, instead of turkey, a stack of pills and syringes. There is as well a good deal of homoerotic art, which is not of necessity bad, but which, as the art world needs constantly to be reminded, is not necessarily good either. Nan Goldin and David Armstrong have mounted stylized and elegiac images of lesbians and gays respectively which do not rise above mediocrity. There is also a great deal of militant anti-Catholic sentiment, thus proving the late Dr. Healy's contention that hating Catholics is the only form of prejudice that remains acceptable. Thus Peter Saul portrays God the Father as a bearded cyclops and as a piece of cake, and the infant Jesus as a surly fetus. The subjects of the photomontages of John O'Reilly, presumably a lapsed Catholic, are, however, too disgusting to go into.

The good news is that political art of this sort seems less important, less original, and less disconcerting than only two years ago. One feels increasingly that it represents the stale remains of an older, dying convention. Though we are light-years away from a Renaissance, and though recidivism is always a danger, we are seeing perhaps the first stray swallows of springtime, after an interminable winter. □

Mr. Gardner is NR*'s art critic.*

BOOKS IN BRIEF

Politics as a Noble Calling, by F. Clifton White with Jerome Tuccille (Jameson Books, 270 pp., $21.95)

THOUGH he spent his entire adult life deeply involved in politics, F. Clifton White ran for office only once: unsuccessfully, in a congressional primary at age 28. After that he turned to the nuts-and-bolts work of party organization, and before he died at 74 in 1993 he was recognized as one of its greatest practitioners. In a foreword to these memoirs (which White dictated in his final illness, and which have been expertly polished by Jerome Tuccille), the Washington correspondent David Broder writes that "Clif White was different. He was always teaching—and few people in postwar politics had more to teach than he did." White began by winning dominance of the national Young Republican organization in the 1950s, and turned the cadre of politicos that he formed there into the Draft Goldwater Committee, which captured the Republican Party in 1964 and changed American political history. In the next two decades he seemed to be almost everywhere: leading the unsuccessful drive for Reagan at the 1968 convention, managing the victorious campaign of James Buckley for a senatorship from New York in 1970, and serving as a senior advisor to manager Bill Casey in Reagan's triumphant 1980 campaign. White's memoirs are a relaxed and entertaining account of it all—not neglecting such high points as his service as a World War II bomber navigator over Germany, but concentrating on politics. No serious student of American politics should miss this absorbing account of a career in its vortex.

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McELROY
(Continued from page 74)

are victims of violence more often than women. In 1994, according to the Justice Department, 55.5 per cent of domestic murder victims were men. Last July, the 13th World Congress of Sociology reported that in 1992 American husbands assaulted wives at a rate of 4.6 per cent, while wives assaulted husbands at a rate of 9.5 per cent. The latest National Crime Victimization Survey found that women were 40 per cent less likely to be victims of violent crime than men.

Dogmatic attitudes have crippled honest research into domestic violence. In 1988 R. L. McNeely, a professor at the University of Wisconsin's School of Social Welfare, and a graduate student, Gloria Robinson-Simpson, published an article noting that men are the victims of domestic violence about half the time. According to the *Washington Post*, a women's organization threatened to use its potent influence in Washington to have McNeely's research funding pulled. In 1978, when Suzanne Steinmetz published an article on the "battered husband syndrome," distressed feminists called anonymously and threatened to hurt her children.

Such zealots are aided by others who unthinkingly accept propaganda as fact. In October ("National Domestic Violence Awareness Month") of 1994, when members of Congress rushed to express their support for battered women, accuracy was lost in the stampede. Representative Olympia Snowe (R., Me.) declared, "Domestic violence . . . is the leading cause of injury to women aged 15 to 44, according to recent research by the Surgeon General and the American Medical Association." The study to which Representative Snowe was alluding actually found that violence *in general* was the leading cause of injury to women in a single black West Philadelphia slum. In only 12 per cent of the cases was the perpetrator identified as the woman's husband or lover. Representative Eva Clayton (D., N.C.) claimed that "in one year more than four thousand women have been killed by their husband or partner." Imagine how surprised the FBI must be: its Uniform Crime Statistics place the number somewhere between 1,200 and 1,400.

The FBI, of course, is not using the expansive feminist definition of domestic violence. In its 1994 "Fact Sheet," the San Francisco–based Family Violence Prevention Fund describes "domestic violence" as "the actual or threatened physical, sexual, psychological, or economic abuse of an individual by someone with whom they have or have had an intimate relationship."

Feminists are also pushing a redefinition of rape. In 1991 Canada passed a "no means no" rape law, which reversed the burden of proof and narrowed the definition of consent. Under this law, sex is rape whenever a man fails to "take reasonable steps" to make sure he has the woman's consent. Even if the woman yells "Yes!" repeatedly during coitus, the sex act could be considered rape if she is in a "diminished state"—say, drunk or on drugs.

Courts are coming dangerously close to accepting the definition of rape offered by Catharine MacKinnon: "Politically, I call it rape whenever a woman has sex and *feels* violated." The new feminist definition of rape reverses the presumption of innocence. Traditionally, a man accused of rape was considered innocent until lack of consent was proved. Now the onus is on the man to prove that the woman, in a sane and sober state of mind, gave an explicit "yes." And since sex is rarely preceded by explicit consent, such proof is hard to come by.

A man's sincere belief that he had consent is no longer a defense. Susan Estrich, a law professor at the University of Southern California, maintains that women should be empowered "in potentially consensual situations with the weapon of a rape charge." Consent can never be assumed, even in the light of cooperation or a past history of romance.

Even explicit consent may not be enough. Dr. Andrea Parrot, a Cornell University psychiatrist, defines a rape victim as "anyone who is psychologically or physically pressured into sexual contact." By this standard, a woman who is persuaded to have sexual intercourse is a rape victim.

In the rhetoric of radical feminists, false rape accusations almost never occur. The data say otherwise. A recent article by Eugene J. Kanin in the *Archives of Sexual Behavior* reported on a study of rape allegations that had been brought in a small community over a nine-year period. Of 109 allegations, 45 were officially declared false, meaning the complainant later admitted that no rape had occurred.

Rape allegations can have a disastrous impact on the accused man. Last summer the *New York Times* reported that a male student at Pomona College had been denied his diploma because a woman decided to denounce a sex act that had occurred two years earlier. She claimed rape based not on the use or threat of force but on the lack of explicit consent.

This sort of injustice is the inevitable consequence of treating men as a separate and antagonistic class, rather than as individuals who share the same humanity as women. Men are not monsters. They are our fathers, brothers, sons, husbands, and lovers. They should not be made to stand before a legal system that presumes their guilt. Feminists must resist the temptation to wield power as unjustly as men have in the past. □

RODMAN
(Continued from page 42)

realism—and likewise our China policy. Foreign aid needs to be put on a firmer grounding of strategic interest. The U.S. role in UN peacekeeping must be based on strategic judgment and constitutional accountability. A foreign policy motivated by the unashamed defense of freedom will not apologetically seek the blessing of the UN for things we need to do in our own interest, nor will it look to the UN for guidance as to when and where we should spill our blood and treasure. Republicans shouldn't be anti-intervention all the time, or pro-intervention all the time. They can be the grown-ups, asking the tough questions about our strategic interests and military realities, so that we commit ourselves only where it's important and when we commit ourselves, we prevail.

This is hardly isolationism, as President Clinton has lately charged. On the contrary, this approach is synonymous with a strategic view of the world. The mushy multilateralism of the Clinton Administration has meant deference to others to the point of abdication—what Walter Lippmann once called the "internationalism of the isolationist." The Republican opportunity is to rebuild domestic support for the job that America must continue to do: keeping the world safe for freedom. □

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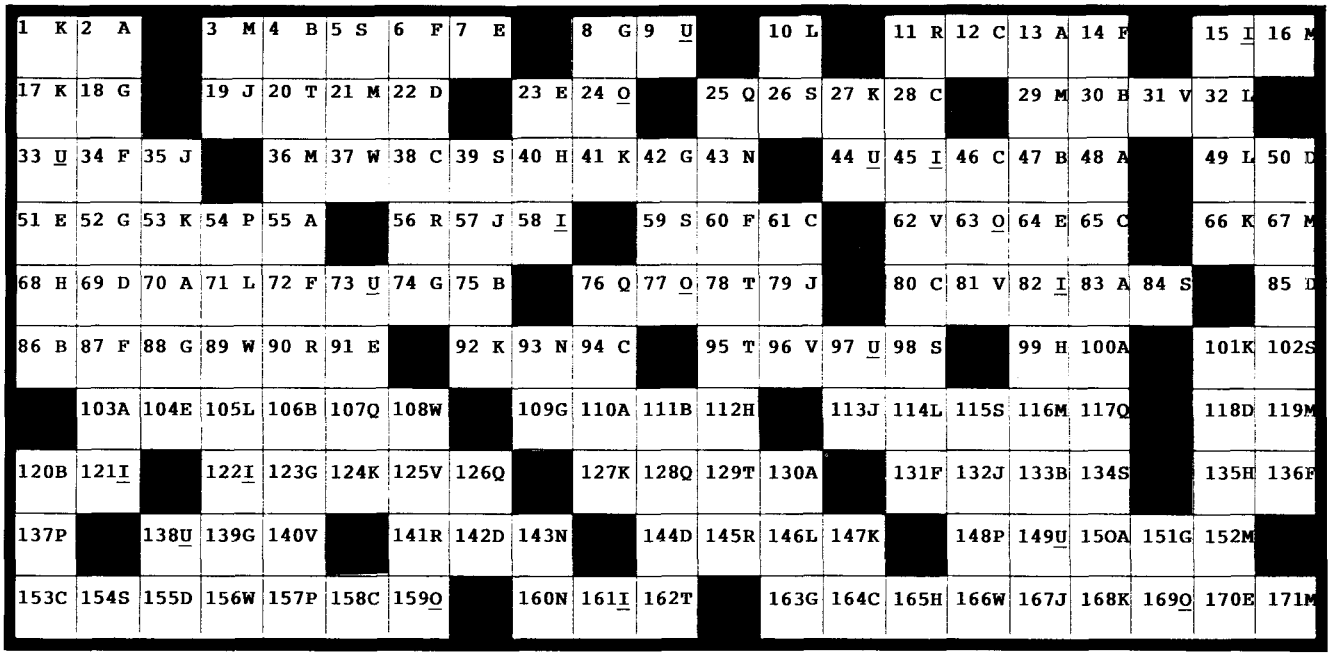
TRANS-O-GRAM / Kem Putney



DEFINITIONS

A. Joe Namath's home town (2 words) — 130 83 150 70 100 13 2 110 103 48 / 55

B. Solid-sounding port city — 133 75 120 4 30 111 47 106 86

C. What thieves should make — 46 28 94 65 153 61 12 38 158 164 / 80

D. Biblical monster — 85 69 155 118 144 50 22 142

E. Great!—to the teens — 64 23 170 91 104 51 7

F. Noted Baltimore type of abode — 6 60 131 87 136 34 72 14

G. Something to be filled out — 42 163 52 151 88 109 139 123 8 74 / 18

H. Like a chicken—in two ways — 135 112 165 68 40 99

I. Rhyming Wisconsin city — 45 58 161 82 122 15 121

J. Destroy — 79 132 113 57 19 167 35

K. Pilgrims' holiday — 66 124 53 41 147 168 127 93 27 1 / 101 17

L. Presidential advisors — 49 10 114 71 105 146 32

M. One-sided, Latinately — 116 36 16 152 119 3 67 171 21 29

N. Lithuanian, ethnically — 43 143 160 93

O. Religious percentage — 159 77 169 63 24

P. Initially, a former world power — 137 148 54 157

Q. Dan, the talking head — 128 76 117 25 107 126

R. Fixes copy — 145 90 56 141 11

S. Explosion — 84 5 98 102 154 26 134 39 115 59

T. One of nine — 162 129 78 95 20

U. Soft leather cloth — 138 149 97 44 33 73 9

V. Classical capital — 81 62 96 125 140 31

W. Ache — 166 156 37 108 89

DIRECTIONS

The object of TRANS-O-GRAM is to fill in the puzzle diagram by guessing the words from their definitions, and transferring each letter of the guessed word to the correspondingly numbered square in the diagram. When the diagram is filled in it will spell out a quotation from some published work (reading normally from left to right, black boxes indicating the ends of words); also, when the words have all been filled in above, their initial letters will spell out the author and title of the quoted work. The acrostic feature, and the relative word-lengths in the diagram, will assist in the solution. Spelling and definitions on the authority of *Webster's Deluxe Unabridged Dictionary*, Second Edition.

Solution to Last Issue's Trans-O-Gram. DETROIT FREE PRESS: *Strike!*: "Owners and players need to do what it takes to settle the strike and do it now, or concede that what used to be known as major-league baseball is dead. It wouldn't be the first time that greed has ruined an American institution."

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Newt and the Popularity Polls

NEW YORK, APRIL 4

It was a professional pollster, no less, who recommended to Newt Gingrich shortly after the election in November that he do two things. The first: pledge not to read the opinion polls until after all the work was done attempting to legislate his Contract with America. The second: if possible, don't read the newspapers during the most heated weeks of legislative debate.

The reasons for this are manifest. The pollsters know better than anyone else with the possible exception of George Bush (who wears scars on the question) how volatile polls can be: the year before Mr. Bush's defeat, the polls gave him a 90 per cent popularity rating. Mr. Gingrich, we know, foresaw certain difficulties, but he has acknowledged that he did not exactly estimate their severity.

The Democrats have feasted on the predicted starvation of American children. A composite of what one has heard and seen on TV is a 6-year-old girl looking through the window of a restaurant, a tear in her eye. It makes absolutely no difference that the statisticians can predict that next year the amount of food given to children by an arm of government in the form of school lunches will increase by 4.5 per cent. The Democrats would much rather project pictures of starving children than keep children from starving, provided they can blame the Republicans.

But a bit of the blame does lie with Mr. Gingrich, because he has not done as much as might be done to dispel elementary superstitions. As things are projected in the Contract with America, the Federal Government will make block grants to the states. Certain liberties will inhere in those block grants, which after all is one of the purposes of devolution. If Wisconsin believes that, relatively, more money is needed for education, while Florida believes more money is needed for the elderly, they will be at liberty to apportion the money with reference to their own priorities. But no state—not one—has suggested that it will cease to provide needy schoolchildren with hot lunches. Yes, there is a movement in some states to test the financial resources of families—"means testing," they call it. So that if Mrs. Jones is affluent, perhaps she will be levied something in exchange for the lunch given to little Patti. But this is hardly plague time.

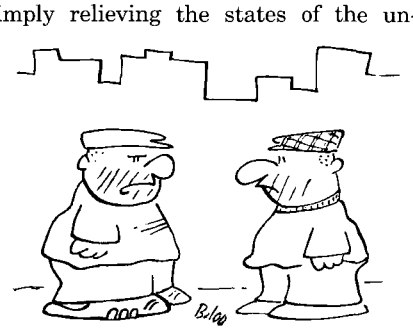
The confusion for which Republicans (and others) continue to be responsible has to do with the identity of the persons who come up with the money for free lunches.

We begin by reminding ourselves of Milton Friedman's doctrine that there is no such thing as a free lunch. It has to be paid for, and of course payment is ultimately made by human beings, given that no inanimate entity can extrude food. Farmers grow wheat, bakeries make bread, brokers expedite the arrival of bread at the schoolhouse, and a congeries of suppliers comes in with plates, cutlery, napkins, and ketchup.

If the Federal Government pays the schools to buy the food and serve it, we must assume that the government has a mandate to do so. That means that the majority of the American people instruct Congress to tax them the money required to carry out this operation.

Now if the Federal Government gets out of the act, then the states need to ask themselves the question: Do we wish to tax our citizens for the purpose of bringing food to our schoolchildren?

But the purpose of a block grant is to relieve the states of the necessity of going through this exercise. A block grant from Washington to the states means quite simply relieving the states of the unpleasantness of levying a tax. The psychology of this device is easily understood. Federal levies are thought to be beyond the reach of the individual citizen. Less so the state tax; and less than that, the tax collected by local government. For Washington to put at the disposal of the states its elaborate machinery of tax collection is to hoodwink apparent accountability. It leaves the states in a position comparable to the heir whose only responsibility is to decide how to allocate the money he has just now inherited.



"The police brutality I can take, but those social workers . . ."

But Mr. Gingrich should abide by the advice he was given. Forget the polls, which reflect the dire predictions of Richard Gephardt and David Bonior. Mr. Gingrich has a streak of black humor and no doubt would extemporaneously agree to send the first child dead from starvation to the Smithsonian at GOP expense. It is the kind of treatment his critics deserve, but not the kind of thing Republicans should do. Leave gallows humor to the pundits. □

Phil Gramm In Fun City

NEW YORK, MARCH 28

Phil Gramm came to New York on Monday to raise a little money for his presidential campaign. He descended into a thicket of reporters there to record his comments on the inhospitable remarks of William Powers, who is state chairman of the GOP. What Mr. Powers had said was that no presidential contestant other than Bob Dole was welcome in New York State, and that no New Yorker should contribute to the campaign fund of any other contender. Senator Gramm's reply was, Who the hell does he think he is? They don't even do that in Eastern Europe any more.

The answer that comes most quickly to mind is, Nelson Rockefeller. The late Governor Rockefeller did not like mere New York Republicans to stand in the way of his designs for America. In 1976, when Ronald Reagan declared for the Presidency against the incumbent Gerald Ford, Mr. Rockefeller pronounced anathema on any divergent New Yorkers tempted to go for Reagan. George Clark defied Rockefeller at the convention in Kansas City. A few years later, Clark became the head of the Republican Party in New York.

Senator Gramm was good-humored about Mr. Powers at the money-raising party later in the day. If Mr. Powers

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thought he had subdued recalcitrant New Yorkers, he was brought to reality. The affair, at $1,000 per partygoer, raised $528,000. Senator Gramm told those in attendance that when on Friday the time would come to record pledges and cash with the relevant federal bureau, his total of $13 million would exceed that of his opponents combined. Exceed, that is, what has been raised by Bob Dole and Lamar Alexander. The other two candidates, Pat Buchanan and Alan Keyes, don't have money in the bank: they run as ideologues.

Senator Gramm seemed a little hoarse, a little fatigued, as who would not be who had appeared in public meetings extensively enough to raise $13 million. But he fought through the impediments of socializing to make his points in his brief address. Anyone who seeks ambiguity in a candidate on the question of Ronald Reagan will not want Gramm in the White House. He identifies himself with the Reagan Revolution and comments that the pity of it is that the revolution was not consummated. "I wohnnt to finish the revolution Ronald Reagan began."

He intends, moreover, to run as a capitalist unembarrassed by capitalism. He went down the list of jobs he had performed en route to his doctorate in economics. He worked as a newsboy, as a runner, as a laborer—"but nobody who ever employed me was poor." Employers are in the nature of things less than poor, inasmuch as they are able to pay others and give others employment.

He magnified the theme. America has a lot of problems, he said, citing such as crime and illegitimacy and illiteracy, "but no problems we can't solve." That is hyperbole brushing up against hubris: illegitimacy isn't something any politician can "solve." But then exaggeration is the saltpeter of ascendant politicians, and it is to be expected. Probably in the absence of a positive guarantee to relieve the country of the burden of gravity, backers of a candidate would feel short-changed.

But along the way, Phil Gramm should give his supporters something a little different. "He isn't, after all," one attendee remarked, "running for head of OMB." The heavy emphasis on getting and spending, on the oppressive nature of government and regulatory agencies, is understandable. But enthusiasts need a little soul food, and there was lacking in Senator Gramm's address any reference to the points of light in America. Making such references is not easy to do without sounding like the preacher record on a nickelodeon, and it is better not done at all than done badly. But doing things badly is not Senator Gramm's problem. What he does is pungent, direct, and laced with wit and perception.

The four or five hundred people who had defied the barbed wire set up by General Powers included Bill Simon, secretary of the Treasury under Presidents Nixon and Ford, and Lewis Lehrman, briefly back in the world of politics 12 years after losing the governorship by a hair to Mario Cuomo. Mr. Gramm was introduced by Dusty Rhodes of NATIONAL REVIEW and Harvey Golub of American Express. He left the impression he always leaves: an intellectual schooled in political warfare, ambitious, resourceful, and determined. It is not lost on his audiences, or on him, that he is a Texan, and down there they breed big men with big ideas. □

Five Hundred Dollars For Bill Gates?

NEW YORK, MARCH 24

It is a pity that over one hundred Republican congressmen have petitioned the leadership to modify their universal pledge to reduce taxation. The defecting congressmen were restive in the high atmosphere of principle, and so they dived off, and are now left to wrestle with expedience. Politicians aren't philosophers, and in that sense expedience is, so to speak, what they do. But it is disorienting to lose all contact with the illumination of philosophy, which in this case tells us: Equal treatment under the law. Not only for women and men, blacks and whites, but for rich and poor.

The Contract with America calls for remitting to anyone who earns up to $200,000, and has a child under 18, $500 from his annual tax bill. There was temporizing even at the creation. Why "up to $200,000"? The mere mention of that ceiling was an invitation to the hornets to come caviling in.

And indeed they did. An hour does not pass without our hearing from such as Representative David Bonior that the entire Contract with America is a design to help the rich. Mr. Clinton has proposed reducing the ceiling to $75,000; and Republican moderates urge phasing out the tax credit between $95,000 and $120,000. That would save the Treasury, per year, $1.3 billion.

Suppose that the Contract had placed no ceiling on the per-child tax relief? Granting that relief to everybody between $200,000 and Bill-Gates-rich would have cost an extra $400 million. Is it worth it to mutilate the idea of equal treatment under the law for the sake of four-tenths of a billion dollars? I'd go further, as a matter of fact: Would it be worth jiggling with equal treatment under the law to realize a trillion dollars? If the question were put before the defenders of the Bill of Rights, the answer would be a resounding No—you must not impinge on freedom of speech anywhere, any time, because if you do, a principle is lost. No (we can hear them saying), you must not attenuate the Fifth Amendment, or the Fourth, because principles are principles. Surely there are exceptions? Yes, if somebody shouts Fire! in a crowded theater, that's one thing. Well, is Bill Gates, by threatening us with a $500 loss in federal revenues when he has a child, threatening the economic structure of America?

The Republican philosophers know that redistribution of a sort has been institutionalized during this century, removed from private charities to public dispensaries. So: x amount of money will be taken from those who have, in order to look after those who have not.

Now that is an understandable commitment. But to chip away at any piece of legislation, on the grounds that it is also going to favor those who Have, destabilizes the institutional mainframe. The city elders meet and decide to build a bridge and pay for it by charging 25 cents per car crossing. Will the local Bonior raise his voice to protest that the indigent driver in his jalopy headed for Tobacco Road is being charged the same amount of money as billionaire Bill Gates? If someone raises his hand to object that it isn't feasible to distinguish between the indigent farmer and Bill Gates, the Boniors of this world have at their disposal the easiest answer: the license plate. The annual income of the driver or owner can be communicated in a nanosecond, instructing the tollkeeper whether to charge that particular car 25 cents, or 25 dollars.

The generation of rich/poor friction animates the thought and talk of demagogues and damages the prospect of a society based on law. Once every year or every five years or whenever, the boundaries of redistribution should be defined. And from that moment until the next convention on the extent of redistribution, the question should be barred from the legislative floor. The question before the House today is whether to grant couples with children $500 of relief. It is immaterial (in the formal sense of the word) and irrelevant whether from such a measure here and there somebody benefits who is already rich. □

(Universal Press Syndicate)

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Scriptophobia

I AM AT war, fighting to save the dying practice of letter writing from the iniquities of "communications resources." Mind you, I'm not a Luddite. I love computers for making letters easier to write, and I love fax machines for getting my letters to their destination instantly. My quarrel is with America's attitude toward the epistolary art. I call it Scriptophobia.

Other commentators on this subject have been content to blame the telephone, but there's more to it. The telephone merely made letter writing unnecessary; our era of special prosecutors and independent counsels has made it fatal. "Paper trail" has not only entered the language, it has replaced "albatross." Letters, if they are written at all, are something to be shredded.

None but the brave and the dumb write letters in an era ruled by the politically correct. Those people pass things around, and they're so wired for insult that their Xerox machines switch on all by themselves. Caught between lawyers and monomaniacs, Americans have become so paranoid that our collective subliminal ear is starting to hear the word "letter" as "anonymous letter." Soon someone will run it together and the compound spelling will catch on, giving us a new "damnyankee" in time for the millennium.

The media have a vested interest in Scriptophobia. Unlike a tape, a letter can't be spliced to produce the desired effect. People who develop the habit of writing letters also develop the habit of organizing their thoughts, thereby endangering the gaffe industry. And if illicit couples still wrote love letters, there would be no "he said-she said" contests to drag out for weeks.

Scriptophobia is part of our larger preference for ephemerality that extends beyond letters to a disdain for the written word in general. A prime example is the "oral history" craze spurred by Alex Haley's *Roots*. Haley did not introduce the form—the Federal Writers' Project preserved slave narratives in the New Deal, and Studs Terkel later made a career of the genre—but it was Haley's sainted Gambian griot who gave oral history new meaning.

At least Terkel and the Federal Writers wrote their findings down, but the griot had memorized a thousand years of Mandinka history that he had to recite from the beginning or else he could not keep it straight. Haley tried to get him to start at 1767, but no, he took it from the top, and if anyone interrupted him he had to start all over again.

How wonderful! said liberals. No nasty old printing press for the griot. No divisive European categories and specializations. This was living history for real people who refused to destroy their environment by cutting down trees. Oral history was proclaimed holy, and anyone who said the griot's obsessive-compulsive fits were the verbal equivalent of "Step on a Crack, Break Your Mother's Back" was called a racist.

Scriptophobia is winning. Computer jocks predict with relish "the decline and fall of print." Body language now speaks louder than words, so courtroom stenotype is yielding to videotape, or—the griot again—the Stenomask, worn like a feedbag, into which the recorder repeats every word spoken by all parties. Joggers make calls from portable phones while listening to an audio book with the other ear, and I fight on.

To give you a taste of my war, here is a letter I wrote last year to the Symantec Corporation, makers of Q&A Write, the word processor I use:

> Recently I faxed your office to find out how to order a user's manual for a Q&A upgrade I received free when I replied to your offer. All I wanted was the price plus postage so I could send you a check. What I got was a five-page fax (a sixth page was blank) listing all sorts of things—800 numbers, 900 numbers, regular area-code numbers, and various support membership fees, including one for $5,000. Besides leaving me feeling overwhelmed, it used up my fax paper.
>
> I tried to call one of the 503 numbers that seemed to be the one I needed, but I got an incredibly long message about press this, press that, and then a period on hold with music. Knowing how this sort of thing goes, I hung up and decided to write you this letter.
>
> I realize you're trying to centralize your support services, and obviously your company is growing, which I'm glad to hear, but I submit that you have achieved self-parody. The reply I got from you is straight out of a *Saturday Night Live* skit about the frustrations of high-tech life.
>
> As a Q&A user for seven years, I have conducted a running argument with other writers who swear by WordPerfect, telling them, "If I couldn't use Q&A I'd go back to a typewriter." I am a walking ad for you, so I hope you will be good enough to send me a personal reply telling me how I can order the user's manual.

I FAXED this so I know it got there, but I never heard from them. In Scriptophobic America, people who write letters are regarded as weird, maybe even dangerous, or at the very least, quaint pests. Since all three of these characteristics hint at intelligence, a letter—any letter—strikes many people as an elitist put-down regardless of what it actually says. A letter also is formal, which means cold. A letter is dutiful, which means polite, which means cold. Above all, a letter is adult, which means—guess what?—cold. Stack all this up against American insecurity and you have, by Gump, a nation of Scriptophobes.

I'll lose my war because the whole country is aligned against me, but for one whose motto is, "Whatever the majority is doing has got to be wrong," there are worse things than defeat. At least I have the satisfaction of knowing I'm in good company. Mary McCarthy rated the men in her life on a scale of epistolary prowess: "He writes a good letter." Jean Stafford's hilarious correspondence with Con Edison over a disputed light bill is part of her literary papers, so maybe future generations of graduate students will get a kick out of the letters in mine.

St. Augustine, asked what he would do if he knew the world would end tomorrow, replied, "I would go on working in my garden." I'll go on writing letters because I'm a devout high-church Epistolarian.

—FLORENCE KING

St. Martin's has just published The Florence King Reader, *an anthology.*

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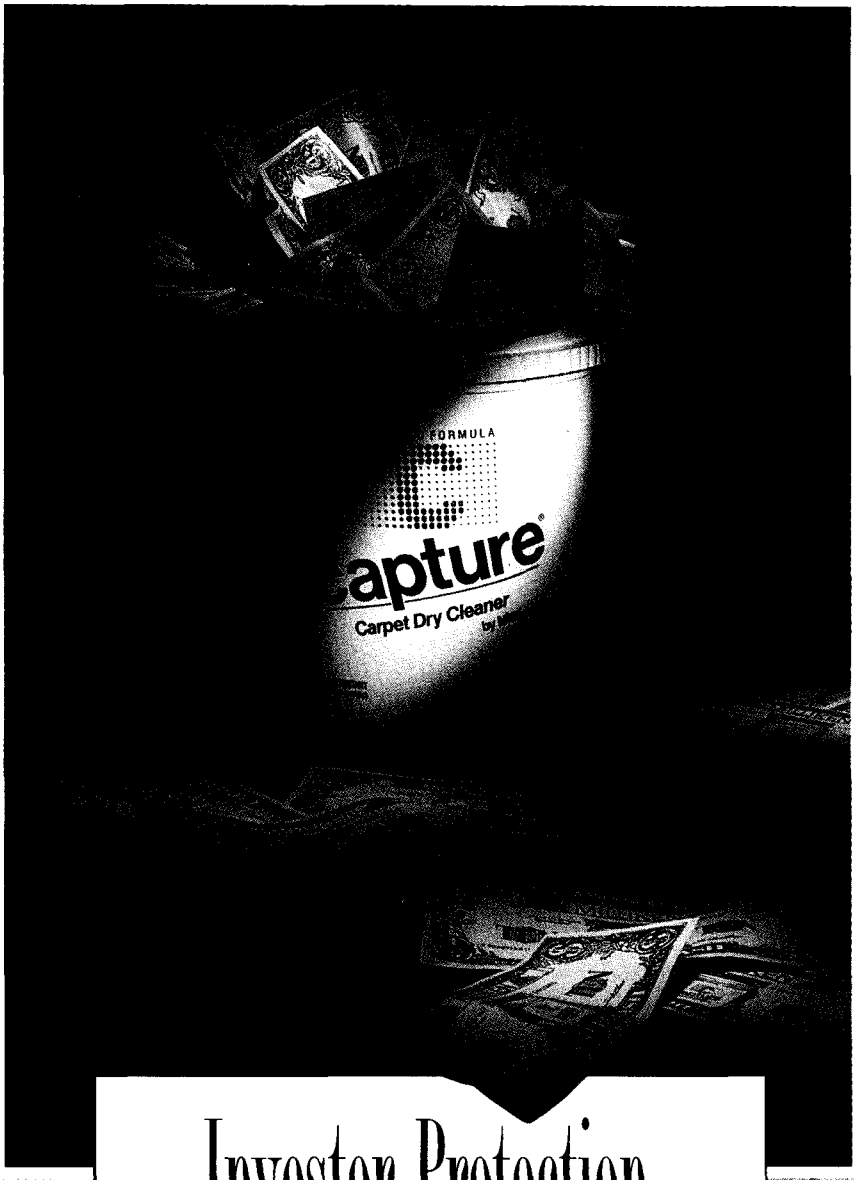

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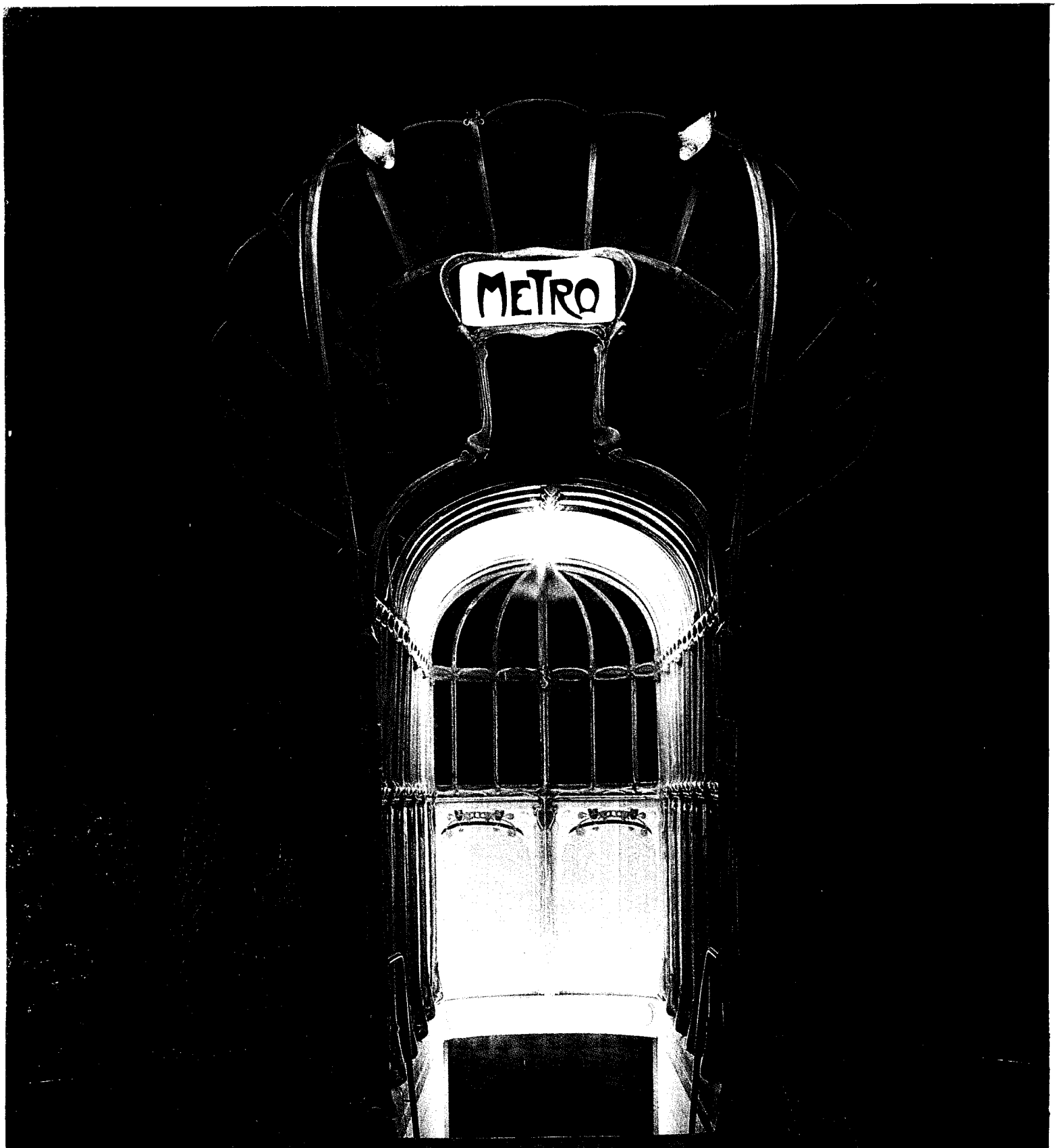

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